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Arqam-Faith

FORMER AL-ARQAM LEADERS PLEDGE TO HELP REHABILITATE COLLEAGUES

TAIPING, Feb 5 (Bernama) -- Former leaders of the banned Al-Arqam movement, released from Kamunting detention camp here today, pledged to help the government in rehabilitating their colleagues and restoring their true faith.

Speaking for the 14 former detainees, Pahrol Mohamad Juoi said they would prove the government's confidence in them by helping to rehabilitate their colleagues as a contribution to Islam and the nation.

"Our pledge is not just to pacify the government, but it is a feeling of change and repentance in our hearts, which Allah has opened for us to return to the true faith," he said.

Pahrol is one of the 14 former Al-Arqam leaders who were detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for six months.

Except for former Land and Cooperative Development Deputy Director Ahmad Salim Omar, all were granted a conditional release under the Restricted Residence Act.

The 12 others released were Nasiruddin Mohd Ali, Mohd Fakhruddin Arrazi Abdullah, Hashim Ahmad, Hashim Jaafar, Mohd Nizamuddin Asaari, Jafaar Ahmad, Hashim Mohammed, Tengku Noriah Tengku Abdullah, Azura Md Yusof, Mansor Mohd Noor, Sheikh Abdul Rahman Sheikh Ahmad and Mohamad Abu Bakar.

According to Pahrol, he and his colleagues who have been restricted to various districts in Perak, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan, Melaka and Pulau Pinang would strengthen their family institution to the true Islamic belief.

Recalling their rehabilitation at the camp, he said their first 16 days at the camp was the most vital in their strive towards a change of thinking and belief.

That period was indeed unique where the officer assigned to help in their rehabilitation had exposed them to various dimensions, like religion, civic consciousness, social consciousness as well as the country's laws and the objectives of Vision 2020, he said.

"From here we see the government's direction is similar to our aspirations and struggles, only they differ in the approach, and we have gone far astray," he added.

Pahrol said he and his colleagues were committed to help in efforts directed at faith cleansing of other colleagues on a more comprehensive approach.

"We are thankful to the government, in particular Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Deputy Home Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob, the Police, National Civics Bureau, and Pusat Islam for having given us another chance," he added.

Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) lecturer Dr Mansor Mohamad Noor, 45, said all concerned should be sensitive to religious movements, as any untoward activity, if not restrained, could destroy the nation.

According to him the problem was the misinterpretation of religious teachings and the obligations of a Muslim as rendered by Allah to his Prophet.

"Without realising it, we came under the influence of Asaari Mohamad, the movement leader, and at that time we were prepared to do anything as directed by him, even to carry our the holy war," he said.

Asked what he would do if he met Asaari, Mansor said he would explain to Asaari the true belief and it would be up to him to accept or reject it.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Salim's wife, Muslamah Mohamad, who was met outside the camp, said she had not expected her husband to be released before the Hari Raya.

"My children and I had planned to celebrate the Hari Raya together with the wives of other detainees at the camp here on the first day of the festival. But with their release today, we will have a more joyful Hari Raya," she said. -- BERNAMA

LAT AR RM