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Umno-Winding (Dr Hamid)

GOVT ADOPTS MODERATE APPROACH TO PROPAGATE ISLAM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 7 (Bernama) -- Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman said the approach to propagate Islam in Malaysia was through education and not by legislation or using force.

He said the government had promoted Islam on a moderate, gradual and in a harmonious atmosphere since designating Islam as the official religion upon attaining Independence.

It is the moderate approach which had propelled Malaysia into a successful nation today, he said when winding up the debate on matters pertaining to Islam at the Umno General Assembly which ended here today.

Replying to points raised on muftis, Dr Abdul Hamid said, muftis were indeed crucial to the country as they also play their role in politics especially to Umno and the government besides deciding on Islamic laws.

For instance, they rejected the fatwa (edict) on infidels and helped the government to ease the tension between Muslims of different political ideology, he said.

" The climax is the Memali incident. An opposition party claimed those killed in the incident were martyrs.

" When such issues are discussed...it can cause chaos in the country because those killed after fighting with the police and army are labelled as martyrs," he said.

Muftis met on the issue and decided that they were not martyrs but instead traitors. Their decision put an end to the issue," he said.

Dr Abdul Hamid said muftis and ulamas had played their roles effectively to allay fears and doubts on certain government policies.

He said the recent controversy between muftis and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad were actually on the enforcement of Syariah Laws by the state Islamic religious affairs departments.

He also said all Syariah Courts and Islamic Religious Affairs Departments would be placed under the Prime Minister's Department with the passing of the law in Parliament in July.

The law allowed the federal government to have a religious officers common user pool for the administration of Islamic laws and Syariah Courts, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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