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Hamid: 14 muftis agree to coordinate fatwa procedure

Kamarul Yunus

ALL muftis have agreed to coordinate fatwa procedure and administration of syariah laws in their respective states, as well as refer to the National Fatwa Council on matters concerning the fatwa, an Islamic ruling.

This was agreed by all 14 muftis in the country during a three-hour meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abdul Hamid Othman, who attended the meeting, later told reporters that the decision will be conveyed to the Conference of Rulers in its next meeting at the end of the year.

Asked whether muftis will be required to refer matters concerning fatwa to the National Fatwa Council, Abdul Hamid said this will not be made compulsory but merely based on mutual understanding and trust among the muftis.

"They (muftis) should look into the national perspective rather than confine to state perspective when making any decision on the fatwa," he said, adding all the muftis have also agreed that there should not be any state boundaries between Muslims in one state and other states.

Describing the meeting as being held in a cordial atmosphere, Abdul Hamid said Dr Mahathir also explained during the meeting that it was not his or the Government intention to challenge the muftis on the fatwa.

"All the muftis highly appreciated the meeting ... now all confusions have been cleared and there is no question of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and the Government challenging the muftis," he added.

He said the muftis have also agreed to explain on Dr Mahathir's stand towards the issue to prevent confusions among ulamaks or the Islamic scholars and Muslims.

"They will try to clear the confusion through sermons like the Friday prayers," he said, without dismissing the possibility that the confusion was surfaced by certain irresponsible people who wanted to make the situation worsen for political reason.

Abdul Hamid said the Prime Minister, in acknowledging the role played by the muftis, hoped for better cooperation between the ruling Government and ulamaks in upholding Islam in the country.

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