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Mahathir-Police

MAHATHIR DEFENDS POLICE ACTION TO SHOOT ARMED CRIMINALS

KUALA LUMPUR, April 23 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today defended the action by police to shoot armed criminals and described as grossly unfair criticisms against it by a local human rights organisation, Hakam.

The Prime Minister was responding to questions from the media on the Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor taking exception to a statement by Hakam president Raja Aziz Addruse that the police could have been too "trigger happy".

"I want to say that it is grossly unfair. I would like to see what Raja Aziz would feel if you keep on pointing guns at him (Raja Aziz)," he said after calling on Burkina Faso president Blaise Compaore today.

"These people who beat policemen to death, how can the police not react," said Dr Mahathir who is also Home Minister.

Asked if he was referring to illegal immigrants, Dr Mahathir said it included illegal immigrants, kidnappers and all such kind.

On Monday, Abdul Rahim had rapped Hakam for what he felt was a biased statement against the police force.

He said that at times, the police had to make a split second decision when confronted with criminals.

Police officers were trained to act as far as possible within prescribed legal procedures while violent criminals with records would not hesitate to kill, he said.

The IGP also said that police would not change this approach unless there were changes to existing laws.

In an article published by The New Straits Times, Raja Aziz strongly condemned the police for their indiscriminate and massive use of force to kill the suspects.

According to him, more than 50 suspected armed criminals had been shot dead on the spot by police in the past two-and-the-half years.

-- BERNAMA

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