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Religious leaders support call for tolerance (HL)

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KOTA KINABALU, Fri. - Religious leaders in Sabah today pledged to support the Government's on-going efforts to promote religious tolerance, saying that they would co-operate with each other to enhance mutual understanding and respect of each other's faith.

The pledge was made when they met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who is here on a two-day visit.

Dr Mahathir had a one-hour meeting with them at the Shangri-La Tanjung Aru Resort.

Sabah Muslim Affairs director Datuk Jamdin Buyong said Dr Mahathir emphasised the need for the various religious organisations to respect and understand each other.

Jamdin told newsmen Dr Mahathir also wanted the people of Sabah to work together without taking into account one's racial and religious background.

He said the Prime Minister also reminded religious organisations in Sabah to be moderate in their approach when propagating their religions to ensure continued religious tolerance.

"All the religious organisations' leaders welcomed and appreciated the reminder by the Prime Minister," he said.

Jamdin also informed the Prime Minister that it would ensure mosques in Sabah would not be used for personal or political purposes by irresponsible people.

Sabah Council of Churches president Bishop Datuk Yong Ping Chung said the Prime Minister's vision to ensure continued tolerance among the various religious organisations was very positive and uplifting.

"We fully support the Prime Minister's advice for all the religious organisation to work together for the good of the country," said Yong, who is also the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Sabah.

The SCC would like to see all citizens in Sabah support the Prime Minister's vision.

Yong told newsmen the SCC informed Dr Mahathir that it appreciated the annual grant provided by the Government to non-Muslim religious organisations.

The SCC also expressed its strong stand against gambling activities in the State.

Dr S.K. Sarva of the Sabah Hindu Association said all Malaysians should support the Prime Minister's quest to maintain religious harmony in the country.

"We appreciate the Prime Minister's vision to unite the people irrespective of their race and religion," he told reporters, adding that it would be in the interest of the nation to maintain religious tolerance.

Sabah Buddhist Foundation chairman Fong Kin Vun Poh said Malaysians who valued peace and prosperity should support the Prime Minister's vision on religious tolerance.

The religious leaders who attended the meeting were State Mufti Datuk Ismail Abas Sabah Muslim Affairs director Jamdin Yong and Bishop Datuk John Lee of the Roman Catholic Church.

Bishop Voo Thien Fui of the Basel Christian Church of Malaysia, Pastor Taipin Molidoi of Borneo Evangelical Church, Pastor Ross Frederick Murki of Baptist Church, Pastor Chung Eu Thau of Sabah Evangelical Church and Pastor Andy Ling of Methodist Church.

Young Syn Foo of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahai's of Kota Kinabalu, Sarva, Fong, Lu Sau Wah of Toh Tze Kota Kinabalu and Datuk Quek Chiow Yong of Che Sui Khor Moral Uplifting Society Sandakan.

Tan Boon Book of Che Sui Khor Moral Uplifting Society Kota Kinabalu, Alex Foo See Muat of Sabah Buddhist Youth Association, Henry Tangki of Protestant Church of Sabah, Pastor Alen Pas of Calvary Charismatic Centre.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok and Deputy Chief Ministers Datuk Osu Sukam and Datuk Tham Nyip Shen were also present at the meeting.

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