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Mahathir-Hudud

GOVERNMENT PLACES EMPHASIS ON JUSTICE, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

SEREMBAN, Aug 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that justice is given emphasis, as advocated by Islam, in the government's handling of the issue of the implementation of the hudud (Islamic penal code) in the country.

"What is given emphasis in the Quran and the teachings of Islam is justice, not the chopping of hands and heads.... There are many verses in the Quran on justice and how vital justice is," he said.

He was asked during a dialogue at a gathering with government employees at the Seremban Municipal Council hall here on whether the proposed implementation of the hudud in Kelantan could ensure justice.

Dr Mahathir said that the people in Malaysia were not of only one race or creed but of various races and religions and the hudud should not be imposed on the non-Muslims.

"Some people say why shouldn't we...we should also impose the hudud on the non-Muslims. But if we were also to impose the hudud on the Muslims and as a result there is chaos in the country, we will then have committed something prohibited by Islam because it is stated in the Quran that God dislikes people who create chaos," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that if attempts to impose the hudud on the non-Muslims would cause chaos and therefore the hudud was enforced only on Muslims, would it ensure justice.

"In our country, sometimes two people get together to steal...one a Chinese and the other a Malay. They steal and when found guilty, for the Malay, his hand would be chopped and for the Chinese, he is jailed for two months. If there is an injustice, it is against Islam," he said.

He said that the hudud was based on justice and emphasis was not on its process.

"Even if PAS were to challenge me, I am prepared to defend myself. Islam never allow us to do something which is unjust, especially to the Muslims," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that could Muslims who form a minority group in non-Muslim countries be wrong for observing non-Islamic laws in the countries they live.

The prime minister said that in Malaysia, Muslims comprise only 60 per cent of the multi-racial and multi-cultural society but even in countries where almost 100 per cent of its population were Muslims, they do not always chop hands or heads.

Dr Mahathir said that wrongdoings were committed by people and the religion should not be blamed for them.

However, he said, some people use religion for their own personal and political interest by making interpretations to bring the religion in very bad light.

"The hudud approved by the Kelantan government is an effort to place the federal government in a dilemma.... The Kelantan government knows that the hudud cannot be implemented by Kelantan unless agreed to by the federal government," he said.

He said that the Kelantan government did not wish to implement the hudud but passed the law to politicise the hudud issue.

Replying to another question, Dr Mahathir said that the move by the government to take over non-government religious schools in the country was to prevent students from being incited by certain quarters for their own

interest.

He said that the government has no intention of resorting to the same tactic as it could not determine support for the government.

This was proven by the fact that some people employed by the government and enjoying benefits provided by the government were not supporting the government.

"We are not taking over the schools because we want to indoctrinate them, to influence them into supporting the government as we know that we cannot afford to incite them or have the time to incite them," he said.

The government wants to prevent them from being incited at an early age as it would have long-term effect on them, forever thinking that the government is the enemy and only certain people are good, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the government knew that some of such schools had resorted to indoctrination and their students were taught to hate the government and to support only a certain political party.

The prime minister said that religion was essential in character development and if people with intention other than religion were to use such schools to incite the students, he believed that the country would not attain progress.

Besides, he said, such schools also had shortcomings like poor performance compared with government religious schools.

"What is wrong for the government to take over such schools so that we can provide education of a standard approved by the government.... More students will benefit and achieve better results," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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