

16 JUL 1999

Schools-Takeover

LET SCHOOLS DECIDE ON TAKEOVER - TERAS

ALOR SETAR, 16 Julai (Bernama) -- Teras Pengupayaan Melayu (Teras), a non-governmental organisation, feels independent religious schools should be allowed to decide for themselves whether they wished to be taken over by the Education Ministry.

Teras president Mohamed Azmi Abdul Hamid said the ministry, which has decided to assume control of such schools, should only do so in the case of those schools that agreed to the takeover and allow the others to continue operating like now.

"Give them the choice of whether to accept the system sought to be implemented on them and listen to their views first...don't force all schools to accept the implementation," he said.

Azmi told reporters this after participating in a discussion on the takeover issue at Sekolah Menengah Agama Taufiqiyyah Al-Khairiyah Al-Halimiyyah in Padang Lumat near here today.

Teras is invoved in research, education, publication, training and the pooling of resources of the Malay community.

Also taking part in the discussion were the management of 26 independent religious schools in Kedah, Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia (Abim), Kedah Ulamas Association (PUK), Jemaah Islah Malaysia, Gabungan Maahad Agama Rakyat Se-Malaysia and other groups.

PUK president Abu Bakar Awang, who chaired the discussion, said the participants were unanimous in their demand that the government review its decision to take control of the religious schools and also not link the schools with any political party.

They also want the government to continue to assist the schools without imposing conditions, including by setting up a special scheme to help students to further their studies abroad, he said.

Abu Bakar said a memorandum on this would be submitted to the Sultan of Kedah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid and the Kedah Islamic Affairs Council.

-- BERNAMA

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