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Mohamed-Media

MOHAMED TO SUMMON CNN'S REGIONAL BOSS ON INACCURATE REPORT

KUALA LUMPUR, March 24 (Bernama) -- The Information Ministry will seek an explanation from the cable satellite TV network, CNN, on its misreporting of the Anwar Ibrahim trial.

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said he would summon the CNN regional boss to seek his explanation on the incorrect reporting.

"I would like to call CNN's regional boss to come and see me to talk about this," he said when asked to comment on a front page report today about the network's report of the trial of the former deputy prime minister.

Mohamed said he had observed that foreign media organisations were sort of making a concerted effort to discredit Malaysia to the worst possible level so that confidence in Malaysia would deteriorate.

"They try to paralyse Malaysia...I think it's a concerted effort. To them, for as long (Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) is there, they will do whatever they can to discredit the prime minister and this country," he said.

Mohamed reminded the foreign media that they were here at the pleasure of the Malaysian government and should not be taking advantage of the freedom given to them in going about doing their business.

"We have given them the right to report and what we always ask of them is fair reporting. Of course, this kind of report was not fair and not responsible at all," he said.

It was reported that the CNN had inaccurately reported that Justice Datuk Augustine Paul had held all nine defence counsel in Anwar's corruption trial in contempt for refusing to make their final submissions in the case.

The minister said because of continuous misreporting on Malaysia by the foreign media, it was important that the Malaysian public be aware of the "bad motives".

"We have the right to decide our own future and the government will do what is right for the country and the people irrespective of what the foreign media say or what they want us to be," he said.

He said that even though the role of overseeing the foreign media would be the responsibility of the Ministry of Energy, Communications and Multimedia from April 1, he would nevertheless offer his opinion to that ministry on how to overcome the problem.

Specifically to CNN, he reminded the network to appreciate the fact that: "We're the first country in the region to allow CNN to operate freely...we've been fair to them and they too should be fair to us."

The newspaper report also pointed out that CNN also misreported that the trial had ended when it was clearly not the case.

Mohamed was at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang near here to send off Dr Mahathir who left for Mecca to perform the haj.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Paduka Ibrahim Ali, in condemning the report, said CNN should apologise over their irresponsible act.

"CNN should extend its apology, especially the reporter who made the report," he said when met at the airport.

He also described the act as a clear proof of the western media trying to tarnish the good image of the country's judicial system.

According to him, such act also proved that the western media,

engrossed in tarnishing the good name of the country, would go to the extent of carrying an inaccurate report.

-- BERNAMA

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