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Mahathir-Sabah (Islam)

MUSLIMS IN SABAH TOLD TO BE UNITED TO REMAIN STRONG

KOTA KINABALU, March 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today warned Muslims in Sabah to be wary of certain groups which claim to struggle for Islam but are actually disrupting their unity.

"In Sabah, Muslims account for only 30 per cent (of the population)... and we must maintain the unity among us," he said at a meeting with the state's religious teachers and imams here.

Dr Mahathir said contrary to their claims that were struggling for Islam, these groups were only seeking personal gains to the extent of weakening the position of Muslims.

"Don't believe these people merely because they are eloquent speakers and interpret verses from the Quran.

"As a minority group (in Sabah) we must be united as this is what strengthens our position," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims in Malaysia should act as a role model for other countries to prove that there could be proper administration based on the teachings of the religion.

"With the support and cooperation of followers of other religions, we can form a good government," he said.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia, with a 60 per cent Muslim population, had shown its maturity by setting up the Barisan Nasional (BN) government and governing the country in a fair and proper manner with the cooperation of all communities.

Muslims in the country should not emulate countries with a Muslim majority that fail to manage themselves properly due to administrative weaknesses.

"We find that even in countries with 100 per cent Muslim population there is enmity among themselves resulting in children and the elderly be killed," he said.

Dr Mahathir said such countries gave Islam a bad image and cause non-Muslims to lose confidence in them.

"We must prove our religion is good by not oppressing other communities," he said.

Dr Mahathir also regretted that many Muslim countries which ought to be major economic powers from their oil sales had instead "become poor" due to disunity and their leaders' inability to administrate properly and manage the country's wealth.

As a result of such weakness, the price of crude oil fell from US\$40 a barrel at one time to US\$9 following over production.

These countries could have easily raised the price again by reducing output but it did not happen because they were not united and some had cheated by continuing to produce more, said Dr Mahathir.

"Is this part of Islamic teachings...Muslims making a fool of themselves?" he said.

Dr Mahathir called on imams and Islamic missionaries at the meeting to discharge their duties more effectively to ensure the continued growth of the religion in the state.

"Make sure that our actions are proper and acceptable...to ensure that Islam and its followers are fair to non-Muslims," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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