

21 MAR 1999

Sulaiman-committee

UMNO FORMS COMMITTEE TO HANDLE SLANDERS AGAINST NATIONAL LEADERS

KUALA LUMPUR, March 21 (Bernama) -- UMNO has formed an action committee to handle slanders made by irresponsible groups against national leaders as well as the call on Muslims to assassinate Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and all members of the Umno supreme council.

Deputy Information Minister Datuk Sulaiman Mohamed said the five-member committee is chaired by Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ibrahim Ali.

Sulaiman said that besides himself and several other members of the Umno supreme council, members of the action committee also included the Umno legal panel.

Speaking to reporters after attending the press conference by the Malaysian Felines Club here, he said the committee did not intend to take any drastic action, but it would identify ways of preventing the slanders made against the national leaders.

He said the authorities had already identified the source of the tape recordings which used verses from the Quran to inspire Muslims to kill other Muslims.

"This issue is extreme...how can Dr Mahathir be considered an enemy of Islam who should be eliminated?" he asked.

Sulaiman said in the tape recording, the speaker said the way to bring Umno down was by criticising Dr Mahathir and all members of the party's supreme council and if necessary all of them should be killed.

He said the acts of slander and criticisms of national leaders were started by the reform movement and subsequently exploited by the opposition leaders, particularly Pas.

Pas took the opportunity to exploit the issue by accusing Dr Mahathir as an enemy of Islam in all their talks or ceramah, he said.

Sulaiman said at least three information officers had now been deployed to each district to inform the people through ceramah, dialogues, civics courses and four-eyed meetings to ensure that the people were not swayed by the lies.

Meanwhile, in TELUK INTAN, Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayob said acts of slander should not be used to divide the Muslims and Malays.

He said the acts by certain groups who were spreading lies now were deeply regretted and worrying as it had negative effects on the community itself.

In fact, he said, there was no limit to the lies which were included in sermons during Friday prayers, religious talks in suraus and various other places, he said when officiating the Bukit Chawi Umno branch meeting, in Kampung Gajah, near here.

-- BERNAMA

HK AO