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Mahathir-Lies

UMNO NEEDS TO COUNTER LIES TO CHECK FURTHER CONFUSION

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Umno needs a concerted effort to counter misinformation against the party and government before the people are misled to a point that they can no longer discern the truth.

He said there were already signs that the masses were taken in by lies and misinformation spread by the opposition and former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Umno now found it difficult to explain the truth to the people, he said when launching a party anti-defamation operation organised by the information division of the Umno headquarters here.

"If we don't act, the people may make an unwise decision and we may feel the effects in the coming general election," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Umno could easily counter lies spread by PAS but not so when it had to deal with lies spread by Anwar in subtle and well-organised ways.

As such, he directed the Umno information division and party leaders to make efforts to convince the public that it was Umno which was telling the truth and that the opposition was merely spreading lies and misinformation.

He said that Umno's Information Committee and its officers should learn how to convey information to the people to convince them that Umno was in the side of the truth.

"I do not know whether this explanation of mine on Datuk Seri Anwar can be effectively used (to counter the lies). If it is not effective, we should think of another approach," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the fact was that today Umno was facing attacks against the party based on lies and misinformation to the point that all good done by the party and the government for the nation, race and religion had been cast aside. Instead, some people focused on accusations that Umno and its leaders were very oppressive and had victimised its own race and religion.

"This is the allegation hurled against us and I found that many of us have not been successful in countering such allegations and because of that they (the people) would reject all our explanation just by saying that we are in the side of the wrongdoers and we are oppressive.

"Maybe, we have not got the approach that could be used to counter the lies and allegations. But let us together think so we could effectively explain to erase the confusion among the people so that they would once again recognise Umno as the party which has been successful in fighting for the race, religion and nation," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the lies and allegations resorted to had reached a dangerous level as it had confused the people to the extent that they did not know what was good or bad and what were the truth and what were lies.

He said that it was easy for Umno to counter the lies and allegations hurled by PAS against the party as PAS tells outright lies but Anwar had drawn up a strategy for his own political ambitions which others could not detect.

"PAS leaders like Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz, when asked about the book 'Shit' by Shanon Ahmad, had said outright that even God resorted to blasphemy," he said.

He said that staunch supporters of PAS believed what Nik Aziz had stated even though they were lies.

As for Anwar, he said, it was difficult for people including Umno members to believe that he (Anwar), as someone seen to be pious, to have committed offences which were contrary to the image projected by him.

"I was also deceived by his tactics," he said, stating that he had accepted Anwar into Umno in 1981 when Anwar expressed his wish to become a party member.

"Throughout the 16 years in Umno, he managed to deceive us into believing that he was a leader loyal and sincere to the party. But as soon as he was expelled from the party, he proceeded to condemn Umno," he said.

He said that Anwar did not join PAS as he knew that he could not stand a chance of becoming prime minister by joining the party.

Dr Mahathir said that besides lying to the people, PAS and the DAP also lied to each other while Keadilan was only fighting for Anwar's interest.

"PAS, even though struggling to set up an Islamic state, has to draw up a state-level manifesto to hoodwink the DAP which is opposed to it," he said.

Now, he said, Anwar's wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, had joined the opposition and going everywhere to lie to the people by underminig the leaders and the government.

-- BERNAMA

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