

'PAS campaign created Al Ma'unah'

21 JUL 2000

Most members support the opposition party, says PM

By CIK EMBUN MAJID

ALOR STAR, Thurs: The Al Ma'unah movement came into being as a result of PAS's campaign to create hatred towards the government and wanting to establish an Islamic government.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the group has rejected the relatively mild way known to PAS and instead chose to do the same with violence.

"Al Ma'unah is not actually a PAS militant wing but are PAS members who have militant ideas," he told reporters after officiating the Kedah Umno Convention here.

The Prime Minister was commenting on his earlier statement during his opening speech that half of 1,800 Al Ma'unah members are also supporters of PAS.

Mahathir said at first, he does not want to politicise the Al Ma'unah issue.

However, since PAS has tried to politicise the matter as an act by Umno, he feels the need to explain.

"To us, Al Ma'unah is a common criminal, but it is our bad luck when PAS tried to politicise the issue, citing it was our work.

"That is why we have to stress that most of Al Ma'unah members support PAS. They have the same ambition as PAS, they also

use PAS logo at their place, on their cars . . . these prove they are an extreme group from those who support PAS," he said.

He said although Al Ma'unah was not own by PAS, it was clear that they were influenced by the hatred campaign run by the party, which claimed that Malaysia is not an Islamic country and that the government is not an Islamic government.

Mahathir said the government will not take action against PAS but will do so if its members or leaders committed any offence.

"We will not take action against PAS but are charging that the hatred campaign propagated by the party has caused a lot of destruction as shown by Al Ma'unah."

When asked on the involvement of professionals and educated people in the movement, Mahathir said they would not be involved if they knew the true teachings of Islam.

"Al Ma'unah have deviated from the teachings of Islam. Islam does not entertain violence, Islam does not make war on people who are not at war with us and Islam does not promote killing of non-Muslims," he said.

He added that he has asked Umno to explain to the people on the meaning of *jihad*, which is to strengthen the people and make them

powerful and rich so that they will be able to defend Muslims who are oppressed, such as in Bosnia and Kosovo.

Mahathir said the govern-

ment will take action against those who misuse mosques to preach and defend Al Ma'unah, including performing special prayers for them.

He said the government is also considering to remove the word "Islam" from any association or party

"We will see about the warning made by PAS on any

attempt to remove the word. If the leader misbehaves, we have the right to take action we are in charge of the safety and peace of this country," he said.