

29 JUL 2000

Mahathir-Gun

BE RESPONSIBLE IN KEEPING FIREARMS, GIVE ACCURATE INSTRUCTION, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, July 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged all security forces personnel entrusted with firearms to be more responsible in keeping such weapons.

"I feel many people are not concerned...we have issued directives so that they would be more cautious with the weapons in their possession.

"But it appears as though they do not pay attention (to the extent) that they leave the weapons in the car, no one taking care (of the weapons)," he said at a media conference after launching the Solidarity Gathering in conjunction with Workers' Day 2000 at Putra Stadium, Bukit Jalil here.

When asked to comment on the incident where a robber escaped with a police patrol car and a sub-machinegun in Sungai Tua, Selayang on Thursday, the Prime Minister said everyone concerned must be wary "because a weapon held in one's hand can also be grabbed".

"I feel it's good if they were more responsible and give out accurate instructions on the matter," he said.

When asked to comment on foreign media reports that claimed he was using the incident on the firearms heists by members of the Al-Ma'unah movement from two army camps in Gerik, Perak on July 2 for his political gains, Dr Mahathir said he could keep quiet.

"But, what would happen if the government keeps quiet and such incidents keep occurring.

"Okay, if they want us to keep quiet and the problems escalate, people keep doing this sort of thing, because we don't want to talk (about it)...that's okay," he said.

The Prime Minister said the government had long ago warned about the dangerous effects of the campaign to instigate people to hate the establishment.

"This is the effect of the hate campaign...people don't think at all, (they) are willing to kill people, willing to torture people...just because of hatred. Hatred for me, (they) want me to step down, don't become PM (Prime Minister)," he said.

On July 2, a group of 15 men impersonated as military personnel and robbed a substantial amount of firearms from two military camps in Perak. Two security forces members taken hostage were murdered.

-- BERNAMA

MNY AO