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Parliament-Mahathir

MEETING SUQUI'S DEMANDS MEANS IGNORING SOCIAL CONTRACT, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that by acceding to the demands by Suqui, the Chinese pressure group, the government would have to ignore its social contract and also side-step the Constitution.

He told the Dewan Rakyat today that there would be no peace in Malaysia, let alone progress, if the government were to resort to ignoring its social contract and the constitution.

This was because the Suqui's demands that the Chinese be granted all what they deemed to be as their rights virtually meant removal of the difference in status between the Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera, he said.

"As Prime Minister, it is my responsibility to ensure peace and security in the country. I know that any attempt to get rid of the rights of the Malays and Bumiputera will result in chaos and disorder," he said replying to Kerk Kim Hock (DAP-Kota Melaka) during question time.

Dr Mahathir said that while the Suqui did not explicitly say so in its 83-point demands, the consequence would be the removal of the divide between Bumiputera and non-Bumiputera.

The prime minister said any potential chaos arising from the Suqui's demands were defused because he personally forbade Umno Youth and Malay groups from resorting to violent protests.

"They were informed that I will deal with these Suqui demands," Dr Mahathir said.

He said instigations by outsiders bent on seeing Malaysia embroiled in anarchy as in some other developing countries especially Muslim nations, had appeared to have an impact among Malays and Malaysian Chinese following the demands by Suqui.

Dr Mahathir said despite him refraining Umno Youth and the other Malay groups from displaying strong protest, Suqui appeared to have decided to proceed with its demands.

"Their disregard for the ban on raising sensitive issues and disrespect for the government's social contract, national policies and directives are akin to the attitude of communists.

"Their disrespect of the other communities makes them similar to the Al-Maunah (armed group)," he said.

The prime minister said that just as with the call for "Malaysian Malaysia", what was demanded was equal rights and meritocracy.

He said meritocracy was in fact used as an excuse for blocking and oppressing native people of their rights by immigrant communities as seen in an immediate neighbouring country and other nations.

"...we've seen how native of the land become marginalised, impoverished and have no role in the government in the name of so-called equal rights and meritocracy," he said.

Dr Mahathir said while his criticism was only directed at Suqui, especially certain leaders of the group, they and particular Chinese newspapers made his remarks appear as if they were targeted at the entire Chinese community.

"If the Chinese are offended because of misunderstanding purposely created by Suqui and certain newspapers, I tender my apologies," said the prime minister.

Dr Mahathir said Suqui had to be reprimanded for challenging the social contract and attempting to grab all for one community through so-called equal rights and meritocracy which the Malays rejected half a century ago.

Dr Mahathir said that it has been accepted in Malaysia that no one community could get all that it believed as its rights and that all communities have to make a little sacrifice to avoid erosion of the rights

of others.

"The Malays willingly diluted their political domination because they want to recognise the rights of the non-Malays and accept the concept the multi-racialism," Dr Mahathir said while relating at length how a multi-racial social contract came into existence in the country.

He said Malay leaders with their Chinese and Indian counterparts, representing the MCA and MIC, had agreed that there would be no nationalisation of properties and rejected the socialist system.

"In turn more than one million non-Malay residents were granted citizenship of the Federation of Malaya after they agreed and recognised the Malays as Bumiputera with special rights," he said.

This social contract enabled all the communities to fight for independence together.

Upon it gaining independence, many predicted that Malaysia (Malaya then) would not progress or enjoy peace as the Malays would grab power and oppress the other races since 80 per cent of the Malays were then poor, uneducated and backward in business, he said.

Unfortunately upon independence, the Malays and the other Bumiputera did not attain much progress and only held a one-per-cent share of the country's wealth, Dr Mahathir said.

Racial riots sparked off after the 1969 general election was the consequence of this, when the Malays, seeing the failure of their special rights to guarantee progress, were further mocked of their dwindling political power by certain opposition parties, he said.

Again, he said, the doom-sayers predicted that Malaysia would not recover from the riots and that it would continue to be plagued by racial disturbance.

Yet again, he said, the wisdom of the Alliance coalition leaders prevailed when the Malay-dominated National Operations Council which run the country during the emergency, was made defunct.

"Instead the Alliance leaders invited all parties and communities to discuss fresh inter-racial cooperation... which eventually created a new approach towards resolving racial imbalance. This led to the drafting and implementation of the New Economic Policy," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that while the Malays and the other Bumiputera made up 60 per cent of the population, the policy only set aside 30 per cent of the country's economic wealth for distribution to them and several affirmative action plans were carried towards achieving the objective moderately.

Dr Mahathir said it would require 3,000 per cent growth over 20 years in order to raise the Bumiputera economic status from one to 30 per cent whereas for a 33 per cent growth over 20 years would suffice for the non-Bumiputera to reach the 40 per cent target set by the NEP.

"Therefore it is not surprising that the Malays and the Bumiputera achieved only 20 per cent. Even so, government agencies hold 17 per cent of that, leaving the Malays holding only three per cent.

"The non-Bumiputera have already far exceeded the 40 per cent stake as set out in the NEP objective," he said.

The prime minister said if the affirmative actions were to cease the performance of the Malays and Bumiputera would decline further.

"They will revert to being the poorest and marginalised race in their own country. There is bound to be tension in their relation with the other communities," he said.

Should that happen, peace could no longer be guaranteed and the country's progress could be derailed, Dr Mahathir added.

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