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Ikim-Fatwa

NEED FOR OFFICIAL NATIONAL FATWA, SAYS IKIM

KUALA LUMPUR, March 20 (Bernama) -- Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (Ikim) Director-General Datuk Dr Ismail Ibrahim today suggested that fatwa adopted by mufti at discussions be gazetted as official national religious rulings to serve as a guide for Muslims.

He said this could remove the confusion faced by Muslims in Malaysia, a situation which had affected Muslim unity and might undermine national order if left unchecked.

The current practice was for fatwa approved by mufti to be gazetted at the state level, and there were instances when the fatwa of one state differed with that of another state, he said in a statement here.

He was commenting on the issue of so-called fatwa issued by certain quarters which, it was feared, could split Muslims in the country and jeopardise efforts to unite Muslims of different political beliefs.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said recently that the Malay Rulers could play a role in uniting Muslims of different political beliefs through the religious councils which they head.

Dr Ismail said statements purported to be fatwa, like those labelling fellow Muslims as infidels and saying one could go to heaven by voting a certain political party, had implications on the faith of Muslims and this matter should be resolved by the authorities.

The two bodies which should act fast to overcome the problem of conflicting religious interpretations in the country were the Islamic Religious Council and the institution of mufti, he said.

The Islamic Religious Council, usually chaired by the Ruler as the head of Islam, should meet and make decisions to counter any wrong fatwa, he said.

"Mufti should hold discussions to study such statements taking the form of fatwa and counter them by issuing absolute fatwa, and these decisions should be gazetted as the official national religious rulings," he said.

He said efforts to clarify issues related to fatwa should be strongly supported so that the problem would not drag on and split the Muslims.

-- BERNAMA

AFY YBY