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Mahathir-Police

POLICE SHOULD DISCHARGE DUTIES PROFESIONALLY, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 19 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the police should be professional and not take sides when discharging their duties to maintain peace.

"The police must be professional in discharging their duties and not take part in political or racial disputes," the prime minister said.

He said a neutral stand by the police would enhance the people's belief in the police institution and the police would in turn get the people's support.

"So far, the police have displayed a high standard of professionalism and this should be maintained so that they can do their work properly," he said at a dialogue with about 500 senior police officers at Bukit Aman, here.

He also reminded the police not to act too freely in handling a situation because in this era the people had begun to criticise hasty actions.

"The people will criticise if the police act in haste and these criticisms cannot be ignored," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) was set up to ensure that the rights of the people were not suppressed by anyone, including the police.

"This machinery (Suhakam) is necessary because of allegations from within and outside the country that we oppress the people...the establishment of Suhakam is also to expose civil servants who do not follow the law in carrying out their duties," he said.

Dr Mahathir said although Suhakam was given a wide scope, it did not mean that civil servants like the police were under the supervision of the commission.

"At times times the police may not like Suhakam's actions but it (Suhakam) is necessary because the people are aware of their rights. Sometimes violence breaks out and the police have to use a little force," he said.

The prime minister said that although various allegations had been made against the police, it did not mean that police personnel had to worry about taking action to maintain peace in the country.

The police need not worry about Suhakam because the government would not be influenced by everything that the commission said and punish them, he added.

Dr Mahathir said that although there were one or two police personnel who acted beyond the legal limits, the police force on the whole must discharge its duties to uphold justice and maintain peace in the country.

He also criticised some foreign media which purposely blew up what they claimed to be police brutality in the country.

"They follow our police personnel's movements during demonstrations and when we use a bit of force the incident is recorded and shown to the whole world," he said.

He said that under such circumstances the police personnel might be afraid to act against those who like to cause trouble and demonstrate because of their vast numbers.

"When this becomes known to those who like to demonstrate, they act more boldly and cause trouble as they like," he said.

He also urged the police to be loyal to the government of the day and not to follow their own political ideologies.

"If the police are not loyal to the government, it is difficult to obtain peace because this will directly bring about disunity in the country.

"If the federal government, not the state, tells the police to do something, the request must be implemented as long as it does not violate the law," he said.

-- BERNAMA

SR MNY JK