

23 JUL 2000

Al-Ma'unah/Challenge

SAY SO THAT AL-MA'UNAH LEADERS ARE NOT PARTY MEMBERS, PAS TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, July 23 (Bernama) -- Umno Information Chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed today challenged PAS to say and prove that Al-Ma'unah leaders are not its members, activists or supporters.

"To this day, they have yet to deny...we challenge them to do so," he told a news conference at the end of an information course for Umno members at the party's headquarters, Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

Mustapa said there was no doubt as to the involvement of PAS members in the deviationist group whose leader Mohamed Amin Mohd Razali and others had connection with the party.

PAS' accusation that the Sauk incident was staged by Umno was probably a political move to distance the party from the group, he said.

"Maybe there are sacred that we might play up this connection, so they find ways to distance themselves from the group," he said.

Meanwhile, Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin who was also present at the news conference, said Umno information machinery would also brief non-party members like students and government employees as well as non-governmental organisations on the group.

Another Umno vice-president Tan Sri Muhammad Muhd Taib, was also present, said the lies and fact-twisting by PAS demanded that Umno tell the people that it was championing for Islam and that Malaysia is an Islamic country, progressive and a model to other Islamic countries.

The one and half-day course which began yesterday was attended by 250 information chiefs at the divisional level. Last night, the participants attended a dinner and had a dialogue with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at his official residence, Seri Perdana in Putrajaya.

In ALOR SETAR, Deputy Home Minister Datuk Zainal Abidin Zain had asked PAS to submit the party's membership list to the government to identify those involved with the group which was responsible for July 2 arm heist in two army camps in Gerik, Perak. They also killed two of the four people they took hostage before surrendering to the authorities on July 6 after the discovery of their hideout in Bukit Janalek, Sauk.

He said the government could do the verification better than PAS and could even classify them according to districts with the help of the police.

Zainal was commenting on the statement by PAS president Datuk Fadzil Noor that PAS could help identify party members involved with the Al-Ma'unah if only the police would provide them the membership list.

"We can do it irrespective of how long is the list," he told reporters after attending the general meeting of Pemadam.

Zainal said it was not logic for PAS to ask the government instead to give them the membership list of the Al-Ma'unah group.

--BERNAMA

AFY/MZM ABG