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Mahathir-Opposition

TREND AMONG OPPOSITION TO BREACH LAW AND INVITE ACTION- DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 6 (Bernama) -- The present trend among opposition parties is to deliberately breach the law and invite action against them, the Prime Minister said today.

When action was taken against them they would inform their friends overseas about this and they in turn would condemn the Malaysian Government over the alleged absence of freedom in this country, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He said this when asked about the illegal gathering organised by the opposition in Klang yesterday resulting in police arresting more than 100 people for ignoring police advice to disperse.

"These are the people who ask us to follow the Rule of Law. When we follow the Rule of Law, they condemn us," he said at a news conference after opening the 40th Commonwealth Telecommunications Council meeting here.

Dr Mahathir said former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim could have been held under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for as long it was necessary but the government allowed police to take action through trial in open court.

The trial lasted for one year and was conducted in English to meet the request of the foreign media and Anwar was defended by nine of the country's best lawyers, Dr Mahathir said.

"And yet they still say there is no due process...I do not understand the due process (which they mean). We are a free country...our laws are clear and we fully abide by the law and still they say there is no due process," he said.

Referring to the call by some United States Congressmen for a retrial of the Anwar case, Dr Mahathir reiterated that these people did not understand the laws and the Rule of Law in Malaysia.

"If we were to have it all over again, then we will have to remove all the judges...what is their fault. If there is an appeal...it is also another trial," he said.

Dr Mahathir said groups such as this would not stop their actions as what was important to them was to create problems in this country so that investors and tourists would keep away from Malaysia.

He said the opposition parties could ask for foreign help if there was no process at all for them.

"However there are so many courts here and also elections. And they can test whether the government will be supported by the people or not. If the government is not popular, it will be thrown out of office and they will become the government," he said

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was not a country where opposition politicians could not win and pointed out that the opposition was in power in two states (Kelantan and Terengganu).

"Still we are prepared to go to the people and ask them. Well, do you want us or not...if don't want throw us out," he said.

He said, "Some members of the foreign media are still giving a negative picture of this country and among them is the Asian Wall Street Journal which published its rating that Malaysia is the most unfree country in the world."

"That newspaper is printed in this country and we had never, never touched what they say. And they had never said anything good about this country where they print their newspaper," the Prime Minister said.

On the other hand, Dr Mahathir said there were other magazines like the Business Traveller which stated that Kuala Lumpur was a "secret city" because people don't know how good it is.

"The reason why they don't know is because we have bad international press," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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