

13 JUNE 2000

Mahathir-Tribunal

TRIBUNAL TO INVESTIGATE EUSOFF'S CONDUCT NOT NECESSARY, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 13 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that he does not see a need for the setting up of a tribunal to investigate the conduct of Chief Justice of the Federal Court Tun Eusoff Chin following allegations against him.

The prime minister said he felt that there was a political agenda to the proposal and an attempt to strip him of his post.

"I think there is a political agenda behind this, an ill intention to pit the government against the judge so that when the judge is angered, they hope the judge will make a decision detrimental to the government," he told reporters at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang near here on his return from a week-long trip to Japan.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the move by the Bar Council to hold an EGM to debate the motion calling on the government to set up a tribunal or a royal commission of inquiry to investigate Eusoff's conduct following the allegations against him relating to his holiday in New Zealand in 1994.

Eusoff, during his holiday, is said to have taken photographs with a lawyer, Datuk V. K. Linggam.

The prime minister said that procedures had been set under the country's laws and the constitution for the services of judges to be terminated.

"I do not know whether or not the process of the tribunal proposed is in accordance with the country's laws and the constitution," he said.

He said that previously, when the government took action to strip the Lord President of his post, it was denounced by the Bar Council.

"Now that they want a judge who is in favour of them, it's just the same as them accusing us of toppling a judge because we do not agree with him. It looks as if they are also prepared to do the same," he said.

The prime minister said that the government had never complained even though many court judgments were not in its favour or the government's party.

"We never complained...we just accepted them because we believe in the independence of the judiciary. But it seems as though while accusing us of not giving freedom to the judges, they want the freedom of the judges to be controlled by them," he said.

Dr Mahathir was also asked on the request by Chechnya President Aslan Maskhadov that he act as mediator in getting Russia and Chechnya to start negotiations to end the conflict in Chechnya.

To this, Dr Mahathir said he wanted to find out more about what could be done and what role Malaysia could play.

"We are dedicated to peace, and therefore if there is anything we can do to contribute towards a peaceful solution, we will do our best," he said.

Asked how he could help while Maskhadov is still hiding in the mountain, Dr Mahathir said: "Well, we can't resolve that. I think he has to resolve that himself, or maybe he can send an envoy."

Maskhadov, in a telephone interview with Bernama from his mountain hideout in Chechnya, has said that he would be grateful to Dr Mahathir if he could get the warring factions to start the negotiation process.

On his visit, Dr Mahathir said it gave him an opportunity to view industries in Japan which were relevant to Malaysia.

He hoped that the ideas he gained could be useful to Malaysia.

He also said Japanese investors had shown interest to invest in the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

-- BERNAMA

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