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White paper on Sauk incident may be prepared

Fadzil Ghazali

THE Government is considering preparing a white paper to inform the rakyat of the entire Sauk incident, for without proper explanation from the Government some people might end up sympathising with the "terrorists".

"At present, the rakyat condemn the Al-Mau'nah group, but I believe there is a possibility, later some people might sympathise with them and legitimise what they had done," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

He was speaking to reporters after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting at Putrajaya yesterday.

Last week, members of the Al-Mau'nah group raided the armouries of two military camps in Gerik and carted away about 150 pieces of firearms, some of which were described as high-calibre weapons.

The incident was fortunately expeditiously resolved last Thursday with the surrender of 27 gang members, including their leader, Amin Mohamad Razali. They were holed up in Bukit Jenalek, Sauk, Perak, and surrounded by security forces for four days.

Two security forces personnel, commando Mathew a/k Medan and special branch detective R. Sagadevan, who were taken hostage, were tortured and killed by the group, while a member of the gang was shot dead by security forces.

Dr Mahathir warned the Opposition and the media not to whitewash the incident, particularly when the Al-Mau'nah group had engaged in criminal activities and killed two people.

"Islam does not condone such action. The Al-Mau'nah group is not championing Islam. I hope there will be no khutbah to halal (legalise) what they had done," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the incident was probably due to some people spreading and promoting hatred among the rakyat towards the Government.

As such, the Umno supreme council has decided to explain the whole episode to the people. Umno divisions will also be asked to hold gatherings for the purpose.

"Umno is for Islam. In our struggle to protect the interests of Islam, we do not need to have a military group like the Al-Mau'nah. Their activities only give Islam a bad name," he added.

"These terrorists are definitely political in their own way. They want to change the Government, to topple the existing Government."

Dr Mahathir said the group had in fact demanded that all of the Cabinet members resign.

"They had issued a statement calling for the Prime Minister and his coolies, namely the Cabinet members, to quit.

"That is their `struggle' and it was conveyed in their first communication (with security forces) through the radio," the Prime Minister said.

Meanwhile, the supreme council also agreed on the setting up of Puteri Umno whose members will be women of below 40 years old, a mirror image of Umno Youth. Its establishment requires an amendment to the party's constitution.

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