

# The weak must be protected, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon: Umno disagrees with the view propagated by PAS that Malay unity goes against Islam, says Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the party believes that those who are weak need to be protected in the process of building a nation.

"We deeply regret that PAS has seemingly assumed Malay unity as something which is against Islam and that it will depict Malays as belonging to the *assabiyah* group ... those who are too nationalistic," he said.

Speaking after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting this evening, Mahathir, who is also Umno

president, said the party feels there is still a need to protect those who are weak in building a nation where the races are well-balanced.

He said as such, respect should be given to the history of the Malays where the orang asli and the Malays had accepted other races as citizens of the country.

"The orang asli and the Malays had accepted other races as citizens with the condition that they accept our position and we accept theirs," he said.

On the proposed Malay unity talks, Mahathir said Umno is still keen on meeting with PAS but it will not accept any pre-condition.

He also said Umno regrets the stubborn attitude shown by PAS deputy president Abdul Awang Hadi who refuses to acknowledge the National Fatwa Council decision that Hadi's decree is unIslamic.

"He (Hadi) is disrespectful of the council's decision," Mahathir said.

"We (Umno) will study the matter to find out what kind of action can be taken to ensure that the council's decision is respected by the people."

The decree, delivered by Hadi at a talk in Terengganu in 1981, has resulted in PAS supporters labelling Umno members as infidels for the last 20 years.