

Tighter controls needed on fatwa rulings, says Dr M

SUN 17 NOV 2001

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri: States need to take over the authority of making pronouncement on fatwas, such as a jihad, so that the matter is not manipulated by certain quarters.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said there has been many cases where Islam is being used to suit the interest of certain people.

“The Pope may call a crusade, but in Islam, just about anybody in any kampung can call for a jihad,” he said to a question posed during a dialogue at the Conference on Terrorism.

“They (some leaders) can even justify why there should be a jihad.”

Mahathir said this problem will persist unless we ensure

only certain recognised authorities are regarded as competent to make any pronouncement on Islam.

“At the moment, we don't have such an authority as we don't have a system of priesthood, where there are tier upon tier until the top post we call the Pope.

“There is no such system in

Islam and yet a lot of people with some Islamic knowledge take it upon themselves to assume the post of priest, to teach people with their own interpretation of Islam of which some are not actually Islamic.”

Later, during the press conference, Mahathir said there is a National Fatwa Council, which is recognised by the government,

but not by those who want to use religion for self interest.

On another note, Mahathir said the BN council will meet sometime in the fasting month to discuss the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS)'s application to rejoin the BN.

Asked whether PBS will be accepted, Mahathir replied: “We don't know yet ... most probably.”