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Mahathir-Terrorism

DON'T RESORT TO TERRORISM, PM TELLS MUSLIMS

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today appealed to Muslims not to resort to terrorism, saying this is just not the Muslim way.

He said resorting to terrorism would only bring more misfortunes for Muslims themselves.

" I would like to state that terrorism is not the Muslim way. Despite the injustice of the treatment against us we must not resort to terrorism," he said when opening a conference of Tourism Ministers of Islamic countries here.

Dr Mahathir said as a result of the Sept 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, Muslims were finding life in Western countries and travelling there very difficult.

He said because of this, Muslims should not expose themselves to this difficulty and instead could go to countries that did not discriminate against them.

" There are countries, Muslim and non-Muslim where there is no discrimination against us. For the time being we should go there instead. When the furore has died down we can resume our old practices," he said in response to reports of Muslim travellers being interrogated and searched at airports especially in the United States following the attacks.

" It seems that being a Muslim these days can be a constant cause of distress. With recent events every Muslim is suspected of being a potential terrorist.

" Anyone with a Muslim name, especially if it includes "bin" (which means son of) will be interrogated and searched at airports as a suspect terrorist," said the prime minister.

Dr Mahathir, who was among the first world leaders to condemn the Sept 11 attacks but disagreed with the ongoing U.S. air strikes against Afghanistan, said it was grossly unfair to treat every Muslim as a terrorist who must be interrogated and searched.

" It will only make Muslims resentful and probably become more sympathetic towards those Muslims who chose terror to get their back on an unfriendly world".

He wants all Muslims to instead try to develop their countries and equip themselves with all the knowledge, skills and capacities to enable them to protect themselves independently of others.

The prime minister believes that when Muslims are strong, the tendency to bully them will cease.

" It may take a long time, a century even to do this. But we as Muslims must be patient. We were great before. There is no reason we cannot become great again," he said.

But Dr Mahathir said when Muslims one day become strong, they must not do what they do not like others to do to them, including seeking revenge like people in the pre-Islamic days.

And for the time being, he said, Muslims had to endure the indignities, the humiliation and the oppression against them.

The prime minister reminded Muslims that they are living in tumultuous times with great changes taking place around them.

" These changes can do us a lot of good but they can also do us a great deal of harm. If we are weak the harm will be greater as we are forced to adjust and react rather than initiate things.

" What little advantage we have cannot be put to the best use. Indeed they may become irrelevant or obstructive as ideas such as globalisation are formulated to give others the best advantage," he said.

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