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Mahathir-Militants

GOVT HAS DOCUMENTARY PROOF OF KMM-TALIBAN LINKS, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 28 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government has documentary proof of links between home-grown militants calling themselves Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM) with the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan.

These include photographs of KMM members while in Afghanistan, their pictures with Afghans and documents mirroring their militant cause, he said.

"They are all from PAS... they seem to be acting on their own as they believe democratic means will not help PAS secure power and that going militant is the only way," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Umno president, was speaking at a media conference after chairing a meeting of the party's Supreme Council at the Umno headquarters here today.

He said the KMM members concerned joined the Taliban for training in Afghanistan and Pakistan and idolised Osama bin Laden, the United States' prime suspect behind the Sept 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington which left thousands dead.

Dr Mahathir said the KMM members had since returned to Malaysia to mount terror activities and bring down the government by force under the pretext of turning Malaysia into an Islamic state.

The prime minister said the authorities uncovered the activities of the KMM when some of its members were arrested following a botched bank robbery in the Klang Valley recently.

"Following the arrest we obtained information as to who are involved," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the group subscribed to the belief that democracy was unIslamic and rejected it.

"They are bent on installing a government by force and doing away with democracy after that and would then rule the country according to what they deemed as the Islamic way," he said.

The prime minister said the KMM maintained that Islam permits robbing of banks which made money out of usury which the religion forbids.

That explained why they robbed banks but were quite clumsy at that, the prime minister said.

Dr Mahathir said it was also ascertained that the KMM have links with similar terror-orientated groups in Indonesia and the Philippines.

"I cannot reveal all but it is all very clear that they are bent on toppling the government by force," he said.

Asked whether the government would issue a white paper on KMM's activities, Dr Mahathir said the matter was being considered.

"Since there are cases that we have to bring to court, we fear that going to court after releasing a white paper will raise legal problems as we are bound by our laws," he said.

Moreover, he said, investigations into the KMM were still on-going and as such the government could not issue a white paper on the matter for the time being.

Such a white paper may be issued at an appropriate time later, Dr Mahathir added.

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