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Mahathir-Islam

GOVT CONTINUES TO DEFEND CONCEPT OF ISLAM DESPITE CRITICISM, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government will continue to defend the concept of Islam by which the country is run despite criticism from certain parties.

"In Malaysia, we try to run the country the way Islam wants us. Our conscience is clear.

"We will defend our concept of Islam no matter how much we are attacked, no matter if they use violence against the government," he said.

The Prime Minister was launching the Al-Mursyid digital Quran which combines the technology of the Compaq iPAQ Pocket PC with the unique software designed and developed by Frazer-Nash Research in association with the Islamic Research Centre Ltd.

Dr Mahathir said some people had hijacked Islam and used it for their own purpose including for political interest to the extent that young people were being taught to hate the government in schools and madrasahs.

He said, in fact, there was a movement to unseat the government in Muslim countries which were deemed unIslamic and Malaysia was no exception.

Touching on Islamic laws, Dr Mahathir said some people were more preoccupied with the implementation of procedures rather than justice itself, including in the case of hudud laws.

He cited a hypothetical rape case whereby the victim would have to produce four witnesses to prove the case.

He said quite obviously the victim would not be able to do so and this would lead to the perpetrator going scot-free.

"We think the law is right but the implementation of it under present circumstances is gross injustice," he said

Islam does not permit this in the first place, said Dr Mahathir.

Touching on the Sept 11 attacks on the United States, he said because of frustration, people would act in an irrational manner.

He said not being able to hit back at their true enemies, they would take it out on innocent victims just as in the case of the attacks on New York's World Trade Centre.

Dr Mahathir said this would not have happened if Muslims truly understand Islam and others do not misinterpret and associate the religion with terrorism as well as one which was unable to come up with any system of government that could work for the well-being of the community.

Speaking at a media conference later, he said the fight against terrorism should be spearheaded by the United Nations for it to become a truly international effort.

"If we want to have a worldwide coalition against terrorism, it should not be just a question of avenging what happened on Sept 11, but we should go after all terrorists and terrorism," he said.

According to Dr Mahathir, there were many other people who were involved in terrorism, not just Osama bin Laden or his Al-Qaeda movement.

The US has launched military strikes against impoverished Afghanistan to get at Osama, the man named as the prime suspect of the Sept 11 incident which killed thousands. The Saudi-born Osama is said to be hiding in Afghanistan.

To a question, he said all Malaysia and other Muslim countries could do was speak up about developments in Afghanistan but their voices would be "drowned by other voices who get more publicity."

One of the special features of the Al-Mursyid is a complete interactive

audio recital of the Quran by the celebrated Sheikh Mohamad Gebruil with the option to select and play any verse (surah) of the holy book.

It also has the prayer time for over 1,700 cities around the world.

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