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Mahathir-Internet

INTERNET USED TO INCITE PEOPLE TO MURDER, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, April 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today strongly criticised those who are misusing the term "press freedom" to urge others to commit unlawful actions including to kill other people, through the Internet.

In response to an article posted on the Internet which urges people to kill him, he said: "This is press freedom...it means you do anything that you like, you tell lies, you accuse people, you urge people to kill each other. We don't like that kind of press freedom".

He was speaking at a media conference after opening the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) in Gombak here.

"I read on the Internet the message urging people to kill me. Next time, of course they will ask people to throw bombs and all that," he said.

The article, among others, accused Dr Mahathir of not being a true Muslim and that he had said something bad against Prophet Muhammad.

Dr Mahathir was also asked whether his messages, frequently conveyed to students in the country that they should pursue the various disciplines besides acquiring in-depth knowledge of the religion so that Muslims would become progressive, had reached them.

"There are students who are not receptive at all...they just do not get it. They have closed their hearts totally, have become fanatic and obsessed with only one ideology and they just cannot see the truth," he said.

Asked whether the government was concerned that this would become a trend among students, he said: "We will curb such a trend as much as we can".

Asked to comment on the IIUM, Dr Mahathir said it was heartening that what was planned had become a reality, with students of the university coming from over 90 countries with a Muslim population.

However, he said that more could be done by the IIUM to turn it into an educational institution of excellence.

He said that the setting up of the IIUM was mooted because at one time, most of the Islamic universities in other parts of the world placed emphasis only on religious subjects as if other disciplines had nothing to do with the religion.

According to him, if Muslims wish to fulfil their religious obligations to ensure a life of contentment, they should acquire all kinds of knowledge.

"We should not condemn other disciplines, that they are secular," he said.

-- BERNAMA

MAM AHH RM