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`Scholars to make assessment on Islamic nation'

SEREMBAN, Wed. - Several professors and scholars from the Al-Azhar University will be in the country next month to make their assessment on the achievement of Malaysia as an Islamic country.

Religious adviser to the Prime Minister, Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, said today that the team would also give their advice and suggestions on the administrative aspects in accordance with Islam that needed to be implemented further.

"These are the people who taught (Pas deputy president Datuk Seri) Hadi (Awang) and me on Islam during our university days in Egypt.

"They were our teachers.

"We will see what these prominent Islamic experts have to say about this country and the recognition by other Islamic countries that Malaysia is an Islamic nation."

The team will be in Malaysia for a few days during the month of Ramadan.

He added their visit would help get rid of confusion and misinterpretation on the definition of Islamic country and jihad (holy war) by some unscrupulous quarters.

Hamid said the Barisan Nasional-led Government was on the right track in administering the country in accordance with the needs of Islam through power-sharing with the non-Muslim parties.

The Government had also succeeded in eradicating poverty and fear among non-Muslims living in the country as what was required by Islam, he said.

"Unlike Pas who has gone to the extent of labelling Umno leaders and members as infidels for allowing the non-Muslims to rule the country together, Umno is practising just what is allowed for in Islam for the good and development of all multi-ethnic groups in the country."

Abdul Hamid also said under the present leadership, the non-Muslims were guaranteed of their security and comfort as their positions are never threatened and there are no provocations (against them) whatsoever.

He added the Government's capabilities in administering the country as a moderate Islamic nation had been proven with the worldwide recognition given by other Islamic countries.

He was speaking after meeting some staff of the State Income Tax Department in Jalan Tuanku Munawir here.

On the claims by Pas secretary-general Nasharuddin Mat Isa in a Cable News Network (CNN) broadcast that there were no militant activities in the country, Abdul Hamid said the Government and the police had proof to show the existence of such activities.

Nasharuddin was quoted as saying that there were no such activities and the Opposition in the country always adopted a democratic system.

Abdul Hamid said Pas always resorted to provocations and not democratic methods in its tactics to gain support from the people.

On Pas' plan to submit a memorandum, detailing its concept of an Islamic State to Umno president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Abdul Hamid said the move was most welcomed.

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