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Hamid-Islam

MUSLIMS MUST BE BRAVE IN PROTECTING IMAGE OF ISLAM

KUALA LUMPUR, March 26 (Bernama) -- Muslims must be brave in opposing elements that can tarnish the image of Islam, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Brig Jen (B) Datuk Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin said today.

He said history showed that such elements had frequently frustrated the efforts of Muslims to achieve success.

"We oppose efforts to make a mockery of Islam and the phenomenon of such actions by the West; we should also oppose all elements of extremism like indiscriminate acts of belittling a fellow Muslim for being purportedly un-Islamic, using force at the wrong place and time and other actions which do not reflect the sanctity of Islam," he said.

Abdul Hamid said this at the national-level 1422 Maal Hijrah gathering at Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil here which was graced by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah.

Also present were the Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Siti Aishah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The gathering, themed "Unity the Catalyst of Ummah's Development", was also attended by the prime minister's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and Abdullah's wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood.

Abdul Hamid said although these phenomena might be minor, their impact on Islam was big, like the Malay proverb "hanya nila setitik rosak susu sebelanga" (a rotten apple spoils the whole bunch).

He said any acts and behaviour which could bring shame to Islam would only negate all the good of the religion because society would judge Islam by the actions of its followers.

"This is because Islam preaches peace but is portrayed by its followers as a religion which advocates chaos, Islam teaches tolerance but is depicted as cruel and the likes which are so shameful," he said.

He said Muslims should realise and remember that Islam is their most valuable possession and thus should be carefully preserved.

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Abdul Hamid said efforts to rejuvenate the characteristics of a devout Muslim based on strong personal traits should be speeded up to save Muslims who were hit by misfortunes all this while.

Meanwhile, 1422 Maal Hijrah Personality Datuk Dr Ismail Ibrahim said there should be a clear distinction between political interests and religious interests which need to be defended by all Muslims.

Muslims, who make up 54 percent of the country's population, could not afford to be split in facing issues which touch on the religion, said Dr Ismail, the Director-General of the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia (Ikim).

"If we (Muslims) are divided, we will become the minority and this will make it difficult for us to demand our rights," he told a press conference after the celebration.

He said the need to defend the religion and the rights and privileges of the Malays should supersede party politics.

"Let's not politicise Islam to the extent of being detrimental to us. If we play too much politics we will be marginalised forever," he said.

The Religious Adviser to the Prime Minister, Datuk Paduka Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, who was also present, said Muslims in the country should be united to defend the status of Islam as enshrined in the constitution.

-- BERNAMA

MHI AR YBY