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Mahathir-PAS

NO DIALOGUE UNTIL PAS EXPLAINS ITS CONCEPT OF ISLAMIC STATE

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 13 (Bernama) -- Umno will not hold any dialogue with PAS on the Islamic State so long as the party does not expound its interpretation of this concept, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

So long as PAS did not explain its stand, any dialogue between both parties would be an exercise in futility, the Prime Minister and Umno President said.

"We are still waiting for PAS to reply as to what form of government PAS will acknowledge as an Islamic State. I hope they will have the courage to declare forewith the difference between the present Islamic State in Malaysia and PAS's brand of Islamic State," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after opening a meeting of Islamic religious affairs leaders oragnised by the Umno Religious Affairs Bureau here.

When opening the Gerakan party delegates conference last month, Dr Mahathir reiterated Malaysia's status as an Islamic State and following this PAS leaders called for a dialogue between their party and Umno to discuss this matter.

Dr Mahathir said if the dialogue were to be held now, it could be compared to discussions between people who could see and those who could not.

Using the metaphor of the blind trying to determine the shape of an elephant, he said it would be a waste of time because PAS had "closed their minds and their eyes".

"They will not accept anything and it will be a waste of time talking to them," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the irony was that PAS had in the past rejected Umno's offer to conduct a dialogue on issues pertaining to Malay community but now the opposition party wanted to have such a dialogue on the Islamic state.

He said the Barisan Nasional had accepted Umno's declaration that Malaysia was an Islamic State and what was important for them was that as long as the government did not take away their freedom as guaranteed by the constitution, "they are quite happy".

On today's meeting, Dr Mahathir said it was aimed at explaining to Umno members Malaysia's status as an Islamic State.

He said even though the majority of Umno members accepted the annoucement, a few did not understand and it was thus explained to them.

-- BERNAMA

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