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Gerakan-Kerk

OXFORD HAS DEFINED MALAYSIA AS AN ISLAMIC STATE, SAYS GERAKAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 30 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has been defined as a progressive, modern, well-governed Islamic country by the world renowned Oxford University, Gerakan deputy president Datuk Kerk Choo Ting said today.

He said that in a chapter on Contemporary Islam in the special volume of the Oxford Encyclopaedia, Malaysia had been described as a model Islamic state with good governance and practices.

"The chapter also mentioned our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's name several times and the chapter is written in an objective way," he told a media conference at the sideline of the Gerakan delegates' conference here.

Kerk said that PAS' definition of an Islamic state was one of a theocratic Islamist state which consists of a council of ulamas representing the highest governing party followed by other governing machineries.

He said PAS had adopted the form of an Islamic state like that in Afghanistan and Iran but such a theocratic Islamist state must be rejected by Malaysians.

He said PAS' theocratic Islamic concept differs from the federal constitution and should be rejected by Malaysians.

"All Malaysians must understand the Islamic state issue and an effective way to overthrow theocratic Islam is to support the present Islamic practices by the democratic government," he said.

He said Islam is comprehensive and has many good values and non-Muslims here respect religions and good values but only a small group had taken Islam to the extremes.

He said the Gerakan would organise a briefing and discussion for its leaders at all levels on the Islamic state issue and the definition of Islam on Oct 8, here.

"We will invite Islamic intellectuals to brief our leaders on the subject," he said.

Kerk, who is Deputy International Trade and Industry Minister, said the party would print booklets on the Islamic state issue in all languages to be distributed to its members and the rakyat.

Referring to the topic on education, Kerk said the Gerakan supports meritocracy for university intakes, and poor students and those from schools lacking in facilities should also be a factor that should be taken into account.

"The present policy on students' intake must be replaced with merit and needs," he said.

On long-term solutions to produce Malaysians with tertiary education, he said the Gerakan proposed that students' intake should be increased in all universities.

"In some countries, up to 60 per cent of the population has tertiary education while Malaysia has around 20 per cent," he said.

Other solutions are to build more public universities, encourage the setting up of private universities and colleges and distance learning universities and open universities.

-- BERNAMA

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