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Mahathir-Police

POLICE ACT AGAINST LAW BREAKERS TO PROTECT SOCIETY, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 23 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the police act against people who break the law because the welfare of the society at large is of uppermost importance.

The Prime Minister said it was the duty of the police to keep life going on normally.

"If you block the traffic, create problems for other people, the duty of the police is very simple. They must put an end to it according to the process of the law," he told reporters after launching the Cheras Education Foundation at the Kuala Lumpur Badminton Stadium in Cheras here.

He was fielding questions regarding the report by the Human Right Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) which blamed police for several human rights violations when dispersing an illegal gathering on the Kesas Highway/Jalan Kebun last year. The report was made public on Monday.

Dr Mahathir said the Malaysian police now had to face Suhakam which meant that they would always have to worry about what would be reported about them.

He said the police would also have to face the western press which would follow them everywhere and even take pictures of so-called police brutality so as to tell the world that in Malaysia the police were brutal.

"This hampers their ability to enforce the law and if you do not enforce the law in this country or any other countries, the citizens will not be protected.

"Supposing the police feel, well they should not do anything, let the people do what they like, what will be our life like. The police are protecting us, they are keeping law and order. They have not exceeded their mandate to maintain law and order," he said.

In the report Sukaham laid the blame for human rights violations on the police, concluding among other things that force was used, property damaged and detainees treated badly.

It also said the detainees were denied immediate treatment for injuries.

Dr Mahathir said in the case of an illegal gathering, there would be no problem if the people involved dispersed if asked to do so by the police.

"But if you say come and stop me, then the police would have to use force," he said.

The prime minister said police brutality was evident during a demonstration at the G-8 meeting of the world's richest nations in Italy recently, with an anti-globalisation protestor not only being shot by the police but they also run over by police vehicle.

Dr Mahathir was also asked on Suhakam commissioner Tan Sri Anuar Zainal Abidin's statement yesterday that its findings were based on the facts presented to it and that the body was not influenced by Western thinking.

To this, he said: "The assessment is made with that kind of attitude and values which is influenced by Western thinking."

The prime minister yesterday said the Suhakam report on the Kesas Highway-Jalan Kebun illegal gathering had been influenced by Western thinking.

On Kuantan Umno chief Datuk Fauzi Abdul Rahman's statement that he had expected more people in the division to be punished by the party's disciplinary board for involvement in money politics, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't quite know the complication of this. I'll have to study it."

The board had implicated the division's vice-chairman Datuk Faisal Abdullah, who has been barred from contesting and being appointed to any party post for six years, from May 26, 2001 to May 25, 2007.

Asked on the position of Bukit Bintang division head Datuk Abdul Azim Mohd Zabidi as an Umno Supreme Council member after being found guilty of money politics, Dr Mahathir said the matter would have to be studied carefully.

On Abdul Azim's position as Bank Simpanan Nasional chairman, the prime minister said: "We'll have to think about that. This is a party matter, not a government matter. If he had misused government funds, that it would be a different matter.

The Cheras Education Foundation acts as a coordinating body of the Cheras Umno division's foster school project involving 19 primary and secondary schools as well as kindergartens in the area.

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