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Mahathir-Tolerance

REJECT INTOLERANT GROUPS, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 2 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants Malaysians to continue to nurture the racial tolerance that has existed all this while and to reject intolerant groups that are out to seize power through violence.

He said there was evidence of the existence of small groups which rejected tolerance and wanted to use force to seize all the power for themselves.

"We cannot tolerate factions that are clearly intolerant. Tolerance is only for those who are tolerant.

"Those who are intolerant, who want to do away with tolerance if they come to power, cannot be treated with tolerance. They must be stopped although we will be accused of intolerance," he said in his keynote address on "Tolerance -- The Malaysian Model" at the Malaysian Institute of Islamic Understanding here.

Dr Mahathir, who did not name the groups, said that so far their activities could be curbed and tolerant parties in Malaysia still formed the majority and would continue to be in power.

The prime minister hoped that the majority of Malaysians would continue to hold on to tolerance and reject all forms of extremism in whatever political activities in the country.

"Malaysia is peaceful and successful. Only the deaf, the blind and the obstinate will reject this reality.

"Malaysia is successful because the majority of its multiracial and multireligious people realise that only through tolerance can they enjoy peace and stability," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that in Malaysia, everyone believed that it was not possible for all the communities to be satisfied with their lot and realised that not all their demands would be met.

So as not to deny the rights of others, all the communities must sacrifice a little to continue to enjoy a part of the country's bounty and wealth, he said.

"On the other hand, if every community wants to claim what they regard as rightfully theirs, the jostling will destroy the nation. Ultimately no one will get anything for himself.

"The philosophy of the majority of Malaysians is that getting a portion of the economic wealth is better than getting the whole of the economic poverty of the nation," he said

The prime minister believed that Malaysians realised that peace and tolerance would enable the country to prosper and that their share of the wealth would increase all the time.

Conversely, intolerance would only bring chaos and even if they received the whole, it would be useless because everything would be destroyed and could not be restored or enlarged.

He said Malaysians chose to sacrifice some of their rights so that the nation would be peaceful and prosperous and their small share would become bigger with economic growth.

"Actually, tolerance only exists if one's interest is secure or if it benefits oneself. Those who claim to uphold tolerance because it is the noble and civilised thing to do are hypocrites.

"As such, don't anyone try to ride the high horse because they ostensibly uphold and fight for tolerance among humans. In certain

situations they will throw tolerance to the wind for their own interests," he said.

He said the key to the racial tolerance formula in the country was the willingness of the majority of the Malays to share the administrative power with the other races when the country achieved independence although they had enough numbers to set up a Malay government then.

"This formula succeeded in defeating the militant movement led by the Chinese because the majority of the Chinese Malaysians chose to join the alliance of tolerant communities," he said.

Dr Mahathir said history showed that the rejection of racial cooperation and tolerance by a small portion of the Malays and Chinese had not received enough support to form a government.

-- BERNAMA

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