

18 AUG 2001

Mahathir-Ulamas

ULAMAS HAVE A HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY TO NURTURE MUSLIMS, SAYS PM

By: Abdul Muin Abdul Majid

SANA'A, Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has said that ulamas have a heavy responsibility in ensuring that Muslims strongly uphold their religion through the true teachings of Islam.

"Ulamas have a very heavy responsibility because whether or not we strongly uphold Islam depends on the Islamic teachings imparted by them," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this at a gathering of Malaysian students in Yemen including from the Al-Ahqaf University and a group of local ulamas in Ta'arim, in the Hadhramout province, on the third day of his visit to Yemen Friday.

The prime minister said that he felt rather sad to admit that at present in Malaysia there were groups including youths who had turned their backs towards Islam and resorted to satanism.

He said that this situation came about due to, among others, the fact that their teachers had failed to impart to them the true teachings of Islam.

"As such, they no longer strongly uphold their religion and they become easily influenced by practices of satanism which originates from the West," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the faith of Muslims could also be undermined by accessing the Internet which offers web sites portraying negative values which may eventually lead them into turning their backs to their religion.

In this respect, he said, the government was prepared to work closely with the ulamas disseminating the true teachings of Islam in efforts to further enhance the resilience of Muslims in Malaysia and regard such cooperation as most essential.

Thus far, Dr Mahathir said, the government had succeeded in developing the country in the absence of riots or civil wars even though there now emerge small groups intending to topple the government through armed violence and this could retard the growth of the country.

The prime minister said he was happy to note that the knowledge imparted to Malaysian students in Yemen was mainly Islamic teachings not laced with political influence.

"I hope that students here acquire the true teachings, uninfluenced by thoughts and views unlinked to religion because (you) will return to your homeland to enlighten Malaysians on what Islam actually is," he said.

He also hoped that they would be able to complete their studies and would be able to help develop the country when they return home.

Dr Mahathir said that the government would also seek ways to assist Malaysian students who have raised the problems they faced like financial constraints while studying in Yemen.

The prime minister said that assistance may even be extended for the proposed extension of the university and he was happy over the participation of Malaysian architects in the proposed project.

Touching on other matters, he said that Muslims were now divided and neglecting religious teachings which call on them to prepare to face their enemies.

This lack of adherence had contributed to the oppression of Muslims including in Palestine, Bosnia, Kosovo and other places, he said.

He said that the Muslim community must have the capability to produce their own sophisticated weapons and equipments like fighter jets and

warships for purposes of deterring their enemies.

"Our (Muslims) present method do not bring much significance. They merely kill four, five or 10 people but the outcome is greater oppression against the Muslims," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that instead, if Muslims could develop their respective countries to become as strong as the countries of their enemies, their enemies would not dare oppress them.

The prime minister also said that Yemen was awed by the progress achieved by Malaysia and they would not have felt that way had they not regard progress to be vital to Muslims.

Dr Mahathir is scheduled to end his four-day visit to Yemen today.

He is earlier scheduled to tour various attractive spots in Sana'a and hold a news conference before leaving for Uganda to attend a cooperation dialogue among African nations.

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