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Hamid-Islam

UMNO WILLING TO DISCUSS ISSUE ON ISLAMIC STATE WITH PAS

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 3 (Bernama) -- Umno is willing to have a dialogue with PAS on the Islamic state issue in an academic manner and not based on political sentiments to resolve the matter, said religious advisor to the Prime Minister, Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Othman today.

Abdul Hamid, who is also Umno supreme council member, said: "Umno is willing to have a meeting (with PAS) in an academic manner."

Umno leaders, including Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, have stressed that Malaysia is a Muslim state.

In fact in August, a conference attended by 70 ulamas, religious figures and academicians had agreed that Malaysia had achieved the Islamic state status, he said at a media conference at his office, here today.

He said if PAS ulamas wished to cooperate on the issue academically, Umno would welcome it.

"There is little difference between PAS and Umno ulamas because they studied at the same universities, such as the Cairo University for example, and used the same reference books," he said.

PAS had questioned Malaysia's position as an Islamic state, and challenged Dr Mahathir to declare the position in Parliament to enable the opposition parties to participate in the question and answer session or in the debate on the matter.

Dr Mahathir had challenged PAS to explain its concept of an Islamic state to the people, however there had been no response from the top PAS leaders to the challenge.

Abdul Hamid said in Islam there were only two nations, one was an Islamic state and the other was the non-Muslim state which must be opposed (by Muslims).

The move by PAS in questioning Malaysia's position gave the implication that this country was a non-Muslim nation, which gave other Islamic countries the right to wage war on Malaysia, he said.

He likened Malaysia's position as a Muslim country to a house whose construction had been completed but not fully equipped, and this did not mean that the house which had been built should be demolished just because it had not been fully equipped.

He said in line with this development, a "Multaga" or Meeting of Umno Leaders would be held here for three days beginning Oct 12 to clarify the issue on Islamic state, jihad and martyrdom, he said.

He said the meeting was being organised jointly by Umno Islamic Affairs Bureau and Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah Malaysia and other agencies.

He said this was the first move by Umno to overcome the confusion which was causing anxiety not only among Muslims but also non-Muslims including foreign tourists and investors.

Abdul Hamid said the meeting would also discuss the use of the name Islam in militant activities, and activities by groups such as the KMM which carried out their activities in mosques and suraus.

-- BERNAMA

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