

09/10/2001

`Pas should convince DAP first'

PUTRAJAYA, Mon. - Pas should convince DAP about its Islamic state concept before calling on the Government to make a declaration on the issue.

Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein, making the call today, said the Government did not have to make any declaration on Malaysia as an Islamic State through an amendment to the Federal Constitution.

He said it was enough to look at the Islamic development the country had achieved so far.

"How are they (Pas) going to convince the rakyat, especially us (Umno) on the issue since all this while Umno has been the party upholding the rights of the Muslims and has elevated the image of Islam in the eyes of the world?

"I would advise Pas to sort out their differences with DAP first," he told reporters after opening the Fifth Asia-Europe Young Leaders' Symposium at the Renaissance Palm Garden here.

He had been asked to comment on Pas' challenge to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, asking him to declare Malaysia an Islamic State.

On Sept 29, Dr Mahathir accepted Pas' challenge by declaring the country an Islamic State and then added that the Constitution need not be amended because of the declaration.

Hishammuddin said Malaysia's credibility as an Islamic State could not be maintained without the help of the other races in the country.

He added that those who questioned the country's credentials as an Islamic State were the ones with a political agenda.

"I don't think that a declaration or debate on the Islamic State issue will bring any new development, besides political mileage to the opposition," he added.

Hishammuddin said the the Government's struggle to ensure Malaysia became a progressive Islamic State had resulted in a society of more progressive Muslims, who had impressive skills in the use of technology, being recognised by the world and being able to compete with other countries on equal terms.

"The Islamic State concept which we are pursuing now is how to face the challenges of globalisation where Muslims would be able to explore current technologies, articulate and discuss current issues, while championing the rights and interests of those who are oppressed," he said.

He also found fault with Pas which had all this while remained silent in the matter of US claims, and also on the US attacks on Afghanistan because it linked Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and Washington on Sept 11.

Hishammuddin said Pas did not have courage to assist in changing the world's perception of Islam in the totality.

"We want to see proof how Pas can do so at the international level, like at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and Asean on the repercussions for Muslims all over the world, though their voice appears to be very loud in Parliament and in the Kelantan Government," he said.

(END)