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Mahathir-Extremism

BN COMPONENTS MUST BE PREPARED FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 5 (Bernama) -- The Barisan Nasional (BN) components, in fighting for the goals of the people and nation, must be ready to face the challenges of the future, including racial and religious extremism, political fanaticism and racial chauvinism, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The prime minister said that these extremist factions were very dangerous to the multiracial Malaysian society and if not opposed, could cause racial or religious chaos in the country.

"These factions are near-sighted and narrow-minded.

"Hence, I call on all BN component parties to act more courageously and to be always united in fighting for the objectives and goals of the BN to evolve a united, peaceful, safe, progressive and prosperous society," he said.

He said this when opening Gerakan's 31st general assembly at its headquarters, here. Present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and heads of the other BN component parties.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the BN chairman, said the BN fought on the premise that the future of the country depended on tolerance, harmony and mutual respect among Malaysians of various races, languages, cultures and religions.

"The BN has actually succeeded in maintaining its influence and integrity as an coalition that has developed a multiracial people in a democratic and just nation," he said.

He said the BN components should be brave in facing extremist groups and not feel threatened or afraid of losing their popularity or influence among their own communities.

They should stand firmly behind the BN because the BN government had been given the mandate by the people to look after them.

"The component parties should realise that extremist factions are part of our society. They don't have much support from society. We also know that generally, society does not like violence or extremist actions by any party," he added.

Dr Mahathir said that although the BN components were racial-based, they acted in the interest of the people and nation.

He said that all decisions by the BN government were made through consensus by all the component parties and so whatever action taken was strong.

"We should also remember that any decision made by the BN government is not the decision of just one component party. It's not true that only one party makes the decision and the rest just follow," he said.

He said the component parties need not feel that they were solely responsible for any government decision and they should not worry of the whiplash from the people, especially their own communities.

He also said that the component parties, irrespective of their size, need not feel inferior and should instead stand strong just like the other BN components.

"We must remember that when action is taken by the BN government, we are actually representing the BN and not ourselves," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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