

30 MAR 2002

Mahathir-OIC

DR MAHATHIR'S SPEECH TO BE GUIDING PRINCIPLE AT OIC SPECIAL SESSION

KUALA LUMPUR, March 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's keynote address at the Special Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers on Terrorism on Monday is expected to set the tone of the meeting.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said the meeting provided an opportunity for OIC member countries to hear the prime minister's views on terrorism and Islam.

"I think Dr Mahathir's speech is going to be the guiding principle of the meeting...(I think) he will set the tempo of the meeting," he told Bernama in an interview, here.

Since the Sept 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, many Islamic countries and Muslims worldwide have been subjected to various forms of harassment and biased reporting, mainly associating Islam with terrorism.

This has prompted the prime minister to call for Muslim unity in defending Islam and also to hold the meeting to define terrorism and find the root causes.

In Syed Hamid's words, Dr Mahathir has become a "consultant" to clear many misconceptions about Islam, which has been associated with terrorism, as was evident during his recent visit to Germany, Poland and Russia.

"I find he has become a consultant...everytime, during his visits and meetings with various heads of government and groups, people ask his views on terrorism and Islam," Syed Hamid said.

So far, 48 out of the 57 members of the OIC have confirmed their participation in the three-day special session hosted by Malaysia at the Palace of the Golden Horses Hotel in Seri Kembangan, near here, beginning on Monday.

The special session is expected to come out with a declaration outlining, among others, the definition, root causes and measures to overcome terrorism.

Malaysia hopes the resolutions adopted at the meeting will give a new mandate to the OIC in urging the United Nations to come up with an accurate term for terrorism which is not levelled merely at Muslims.

-- BERNAMA

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