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Mahathir-Muslim

DR MAHATHIR MEETS MUSLIM COMMUNITY IN MOSCOW

By: Ahmad Zukiman Zain

MOSCOW, March 15 (Bernama) -- Noting the significance of Maal Hijrah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today met the Muslim community and performed Friday prayers at Moscow's main mosque here.

Chairman of Russian Mufti Council Ravil Gainutdin, who greeted the Prime Minister, said the Muslim community in Russia was honoured with his visit to the Perfect Mira Mosque.

There are some 1.5 million Muslims in Moscow out of a total 20 million in Russia.

Speaking at the Friday congregation, Dr Mahathir said it is the duty of Muslims to dispel the negative image portrayed by others against the religion.

"Today we live in a difficult time when Muslims are being accused of being terrorists and of being irresponsible and creating a lot of problems in the world,"

"It is our duty to prove that this image of Islam is wrong," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Muslims could do this by following the teachings of Islam to live in peace.

"We should not resort to violence in order to reclaim the greatness of our past," he said.

Instead Muslims should acquire knowledge in all fields and develop the community and country, he said.

"There is no reason why Muslims and Muslim countries cannot be as developed as the most developed country in the world," he said.

Malaysia wanted to prove that an Islamic country can be as developed as any developed country in the West, he said.

"Without forgetting the teachings of Islam, we have tried to acquire knowledge so that we can be as developed as other countries in the world," he said.

The Prime Minister said Muslims would be respected if they were developed and strong.

Dr Mahathir presented a US\$10,000 (RM38,000) contribution from the Government for the mosque's programmes.

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