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Islamic state: PM hits out at DAP

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PETALING JAYA, Fri. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad lambasted the DAP today for its campaign against the declaration of Malaysia as an Islamic state.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia was internationally recognised as a model Islamic nation whose population was liberal and prepared to live harmoniously with those of other faiths.

"How does DAP suffer as a result of this country being declared a Muslim country, tell me! Show (proof) that they have suffered because this is a Muslim country... whether we have been unjust to them or whatever.

"In fact, we are very liberal... Muslims and non-Muslims alike."

Dr Mahathir said that there was no need to retract the declaration as requested by DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang, as the declaration was a factual statement.

"This country is acknowledged by the whole world as an Islamic country. We also declared that it is an Islamic country, (an) Islamic country where non-Muslims can live in peace, get fair treatment and justice.

"There is no problem," he said.

Speaking at a Press conference at the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Subang upon arriving home from a week-long visit to the Vatican City, Luxembourg and Switzerland this morning, Dr Mahathir said the DAP was bent on creating an issue out of the declaration as the Opposition party was bankrupt of fresh ideas.

"It is a party which no longer gets support from anybody, so it has to bring up issues, that is all it can think of. What is it that it is fighting for?"

The Prime Minister said the DAP had lost its relevance. "In fact, there is no reason for the DAP to exist anymore, just shut it down."

Asked if the DAP's opposition was misdirected as Lim had refrained from objecting to unjust provisions in the Terengganu Government's Hudud Bill, Dr Mahathir said DAP was a weird party which would "sleep with just anybody" to get votes.

"It is cohabiting with all kinds of people, strange bed-fellows. As long as it can get votes, even just a single vote, it will 'sleep' with anybody," he said.

On the international front, Dr Mahathir was asked if he was prepared to be a mediator or exert his influence to ease tensions between India and Pakistan.

The Prime Minister said it was unlikely that Malaysia could play an effective role when even powerful nations, such as the United States, could not use their influence there.

"We are small. What can Malaysia do?"

Dr Mahathir, however, reiterated Kuala Lumpur's stand that military confrontations would not help anyone, let alone solve the problem.

"They should opt for discussions, this is our stand.

"We do not know about the international community but we have repeatedly stated our stand very clearly," he added.

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's special envoy, Najmuddin Shaikh, was here earlier this week to deliver a special message to Dr Mahathir.

Speaking to the Press during the trip, Najmuddin expressed his Government's hope that Dr Mahathir could help ease the tensions between the two nuclear powers.

"We hope leaders like Dr Mahathir could play a positive role in easing tensions.

"Maybe, he could speak to the Indian side," Najmuddin had said.

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