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Mahathir-ulama

MANY WHO ARE NOT CLAIMING BE ULAMA, SAYS MAHATHIR

SEPANG, Feb 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said his speech at the World Economic Forum in New York was directed in general at those who claimed to be ulama but are not Islamic scholars.

He said many of them were nothing but "political ulama" who were trying to legitimize all wrongs committed by their political party and using their influence to mislead the Muslims.

"For that reason I condemned them because they claim that only they have the right to govern a state. This is what they say.

"I feel that a state should be governed by someone who is efficient in administration," he said at a news conference at the KL International Airport (KLIA) here on his return from one month overseas trip.

He was asked to comment on PAS allegation that he had insulted ulama in his speech in New York before Israeli leader Ariel Sharon.

Dr Mahathir said that it would have been different if those involved were learned people, but to say someone who had a religious education as an expert in all fields would be certainly not true.

However, those involved claimed that only they could govern.

He said his speech was in general as "political ulama" could be found everywhere.

"We know that in the history of Islam there were many ulama, and we become their followers, people such as al-Ghazali, Hanafi, Hambali, Maliki and Shafie, these people had no political interest," he said.

Prime Minister also denied that Sharon was present as claimed at the economic forum when he gave the speech.

"Mosly Muslims and some Christians and Jews present and we must make this clear because they are confused that Muslims are terrorists and irrational," he said.

On the National Ulama Consultative Council, he said it would be set up as soon as possible and would include as members ulama who had no political interest.

-- BERNAMA

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