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Mahathir-KMM

PM EXPRESSES CONCERN OVER CHILDREN SENT TO STUDY RELIGION IN PAKISTAN

MELAKA, Jan 25 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed concern that many parents are fond of sending their children to Pakistan to study in madrasahs there.

"We are now worried over these parents who are fond of sending their children to Pakistan and maybe some other places. Do they (actually) study about religion or something else," he told reporters after launching the 20th World Customs Day celebrations at the Customs Academy in Bukit Baru here.

He was asked to comment on today's news reports on the recent arrest of 10 suspected members of the second cell of the Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM).

Dr Mahathir said he was worried that these students could forge links with the Taliban and the Al-Qaeda and would learn about the handling of weapons, the making of bombs and tactics of war instead of learning about religion and when they return home, they practise all these in the country.

"They have been trained on all these there and when they return, they will attempt to carry them out here. That's why we know that the murder of (Joe) Fernandez (the former Lunas state assemblyman) was committed by them," he said.

"That's also the case when several bombs were exploded and they tried to seize weapons at the Guar Cempedak police station and rob a bank to meet their expenses. All these they learnt there," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the government had taken stern measures against the militant groups in the country because if their activities were left unchecked, it would spread further.

He said that the government knew that these groups who had gone to Pakistan on the pretext of studying religion had not been taught religion but ways to launch a rebellion and to topple the government.

"That is why in an interview with a young student of a madrasah, he has stated that he wanted to become a pure warrior. Therefore, if we were to study religion to become a Mujahidin, it means that we are not studying religion...if it's religion we want to study, then by all means study the religion," he said.

Asked on the action by the United States to send its forces to southern Philippines, the prime minister said that Malaysia had taken stern measures to deal with terrorism and there was no need to call on others to do so.

"We knew about it, we've taken action without having to call on others (to do so)...everybody knows that. So far, no countries have accused Malaysia of being a country which provides a safe haven for terrorists.

"Some countries may have done so but we do not harbour terrorists," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that it was incumbent on all countries to counter terrorism and curb their movement as their activities could worsen the situation and affect a country's economy.

"We do not want, we are not prepared to see terrorists free to act in our country. Even if they have not launched any attacks on us, we cannot condone terrorist activities in our country," he said.

Asked whether there exist kindergartens for Muslim children where they were taught to hate the government and resort to violence, Dr Mahathir said that this tendency had not reached such a level in the country but it was clear that some quarters were bent on doing this and there were religious

schools where hatred towards the government had been instilled.

"Consumed by hatred, they teach how to topple the government through violence. That is what's happening in Pakistan, Afghanistan. Previously, Afghanistan was ruled by the Rabbani, but this group (Taliban) went on to topple the Rabbani government.

"They also regard any Islamic government as unIslamic. As such, they plan to topple all Islamic governments," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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