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`Dr M should not head proposed ulama council'

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Pas leaders regard as untenable the proposal that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad chair the proposed National Ulama Consultative Council.

They said as head of the Government, Dr Mahathir should not be involved in any advisory body to the Government.

"Who would dare to give their views or advice if the Prime Minister is head of the ulama consultative council?"

This whole idea of having a new body is not necessary at all," Pas information chief Azizan Abdul Razak said.

He was commenting on the proposal by Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah deputy president Abdul Manaf Ahmad.

Abdul Manaf was reported as saying that making the Prime Minister chairman of the proposed council would enable him to listen to the views of the ulama and participate in discussions.

This, he said, would also reduce doubts or allegations that the Government was now separating religion from the country's administration.

Azizan, who is also Sala Assemblyman, said no head of government should head an advisory body to the Government if the latter was to function effectively.

Pas Youth chief Mahfuz Omar said there was no way the council could operate independently if headed by the Prime Minister.

"If Dr Mahathir heads the council, all decisions will be controlled by his thinking and they would surely bend to benefit Umno since it is the Umno supreme council's proposal," he said.

He reiterated that the proposed council would overlap the functions of the National Fatwa Council.

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