

07 JUN 2002
Abdullah-PAS
PAS-LED TERENGGANU GOVT ARROGANT, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, June 7 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has described PAS as arrogant for refusing to consult the Attorney-General's Chambers on the proposed Syariah Criminal Enactment Bill (Hudud and Qisas) before tabling it at the Terengganu State Legislative Assembly sitting next month.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the PAS government should refer the draft of the Bill to the A-G's Chambers as that was the procedure under the law.

"This is not a legal consideration, it is the law, and we have laws."

"Yes, for us God is foremost, but there are laws in this world .. if there were no laws, the people will be more chaotic," he told the media after launching an International Conference on Biomedical Engineering here today.

Abdullah was responding to the statement by Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang who said the state government would table the proposed Bill without referring to the A-G's Chambers as he believed his responsibility towards the Creator took precedence over fulfilling the request of the A-G's Chambers.

The Deputy Prime Minister stressed the laws formulated by the government were not contradicting Islamic teachings.

"We want to formulate laws, and the laws are important for the people's well-being .. however the methods and processes of implementation of the laws should abide by the procedures."

"If the world did not have laws we will all be chaotic," he said.

On the set-up of the joint action committee comprising groups representing women who opposed the Hudud provisions proposed by the Terengganu State Government, Abdullah said the committee was formed by groups who felt uncomfortable over some aspects of the draft Bill.

He said the groups strongly opposed provisions which they felt would not achieve justice.

"The laws of Islam accord due importance to the rule of justice, what is the point of us having laws implemented by using a method and a system that ultimately give rise to injustice," he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister hoped the Terengganu state government would look into the concerns of the groups as the implementation procedures for the proposed Bill required careful study by seeking views of other quarters.

On the arrest of DAP Chairman Lim Kit Siang under the Sedition Act, Abdullah, who is also Home Minister said Lim, who was released on bail, will be charged in court.

Lim was arrested at Pasir Pinji, Ipoh, on Wednesday while distributing party campaign leaflets "No to 911, No to 929, Yes to 1957".

Abdullah, who regarded Lim's actions as politically-motivated said although Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had already clarified Malaysia's position as an Islamic state, Lim chose to issue a different statement and his action had warranted police action.

"The statement made by the Prime Minister did not state that we had an agenda to turn the country into an Islamic state with measures taken in stages," he said.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir had explained that the country was deemed an Islamic state as its development so far was in line with Islamic teachings,

as evident in the role played by Muslims in various sectors.

He had explained that the country's achievements in various sectors including in the legal, knowledge and medical fields were for the advancement of the ummah towards creating a harmonious and peaceful society.

He said as the achievements and progress achieved so far were in compliance with Islamic teachings, it reaffirmed that the country was an Islamic state, Abdullah said.

He said in reality the progress achieved by the government so far had not caused any hardship to followers of other faiths, and the government had never been an obstacle to other faiths in continuing with their religious practices as this was enshrined in the federal constitution.

Abdullah said he was perplexed that Lim had not taken any action against PAS' efforts to introduce the Hudud laws.

"It is obvious that PAS' actions are condoned, while Umno's actions are opposed. In this context I feel his actions seem to be politically-motivated," he said.

On a news report which quoted the Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) as saying that Malaysia had been rated 6.29, and failed to reach the pass mark together with several other Asian countries in the legal and police systems, Abdullah said non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have different opinions in so many things.

As far as the Malaysian police were concerned, he said it was always ready to learn, ready to make changes and ready to respond positively to any feedback to improve its quality of service.

The Malaysian police, he said, recorded good performance in combating crime because its rate of success in solving criminal cases was higher than the average recorded by Interpol.

On a question by an American journalist that Malaysia had been reported as the first country to alert American authorities in January 2000 about one of the suspects in the September 11 attack in New York, Abdullah said the Malaysian authorities were tipped on the presence of the man here and had confirmed the information with the US authorities.

"We would'nt have known who he was then, we did confirm that that's the man they are talking about, and that he was here. On what he was going to do, what he will be involved in finally ... that is not something within our knowledge," he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said he did not know whether Malaysia had notified the American authorities that the suspect was enroute to America because the details were intelligence information.

"I do not know what the Americans would want to do (with the information), it is not for us to even ask them what they want to do with him or what action they would like to take or what other information they have concerning the man," he added.

-- BERNAMA
AFY HS ANA