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Hamid-Islam

UMNO NEEDS TO WORK HARD TO EXPLAIN ITS STRUGGLES FOR ISLAM

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 14 (Bernama) -- Umno needs to work hard to correct the Malay perception of Islam as many aspects of the religion have been deviated by the opposition who are more keen to exploit it for political gain.

Religious Advisor to the Prime Minister, Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Othman said these groups used mosques and suraus as a place to convey their interpretations on Islam in a narrow and confusing perspective.

He said Umno members must intensify their dakwah activities to explain to the public that the party's struggles were in line with the requirements of Islam which demanded that every national leader must possess the two main elements namely to preserve religion and politics so that the people could lead a proper life.

"These two aspects are in accordance with the teachings of the Al-Quran. But PAS chooses to cover up these aspects so that they are not appreciated as a requirement in Islam," he said at a media conference after chairing the Informal Discussion On Islam at the PWTC, here today.

The discussion, organised by Umno, was attended by about 20 intellectuals, ulamas and leaders of Islamic organisations from abroad who participated in the "Mahathir Dialogue On Advancement of the Ummah". They were expected to hold a dialogue with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at Cyberjaya, tonight.

Dr Abdul Hamid said these intellectuals had been briefed on the situation of the ummah in Malaysia so that their conclusion at the end of the discussion would be used as a guide for Umno to unite the Muslims in the country.

He said several participants had concluded that the opposition domination of mosques and suraus were also occurring in most Muslim countries.

"We are also adopting the 'take for granted' attitude here to the extent that we find it's difficult for us to enter these places lately to explain the Umno struggles for Islam," he said.

He said if Umno members could explain these struggles to the people so that they would understand, then it would give the party political credit.

Meanwhile, Dr Fouad Alaoui, Secretary-General of the French Islamic Organisation Union, said during the session that unity among Muslims could only be nurtured if they could understand the teachings of Islam.

"To understand Islam is to know, to love and to serve. One cannot stand without another. You cannot serve Islam if you didn't know Islam or didn't love it, or you just cannot love Islam if you didn't know anything about it," he said.

Dr Yahiya Khairy Abdul Rahman, from the Islamic Council of Southern California, said during the session that Muslim leaders must be close to society and know the people's needs.

He also suggested Malaysia should send more students abroad to Islamic Universities throughout the world and, upon their return, engage them to work at the grassroots level to be part of the community.

-- BERNAMA

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