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Mahathir-PUM

DR M: PUM NOT A GENUINE ULAMA BODY TO DEFEND NIK AZIZ'S STATEMENT

KUALA TERENGGANU, Aug 16 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Muslim Scholars' Association of Malaysia (PUM) is not a genuine ulama body to defend Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik for using the words "gangster" and "cruel" to describe God's attributes.

The prime minister said the association's action was regrettable as it could influence some of the people in the country to the point that they believed whatever was said by the PAS leader.

"Right from the start, I don't consider PUM as an ulama association. I don't know under what qualification they claim themselves to be ulama.

"By supporting matters opposed to Islam, these people are far from being ulama," he told a media conference at a hotel here in conjunction with his one-day visit to Terengganu.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir opened the Terengganu Barisan Nasional (BN) Convention and attended a leader-with-the-people gathering in Marang, near here.

The PUM said last week it respected the role played by Nik Aziz as an ulama over the controversy on the use of the words "gangster" and "cruel" to describe God's qualities.

PUM President, Abdul Ghani Samsuddin, who described Nik Aziz as "ulama Rabbani" had said uttering of the words was not wrong as it was to educate the people.

Dr Mahathir said the PUM's action had caused the people to be carried away by PAS' propaganda to accept whatever was said by the party leaders.

"We know that our people once influenced by PAS, they will accept anything, even to the extent they are brave to say God uses obscene language and they are prepared to accept.

"I thought if Nik Aziz speaks like that, people will run away from him, but they didn't. I'm surprised," he said.

Asked on the actions taken by the federal government to correct PAS' wrongdoings, Dr Mahathir said the best way was to provide full explanation to the people.

He said legal action like invoking the Internal Security Act (ISA) was not effective and could cause the people to accuse the government of being cruel if they did not receive accurate information and clear explanation.

"We must explain to the people. It's very important, if we do not do something about it, the people will think we are unfair or cruel. If the people understand, action (legal) can be taken easily," he said.

"So, under this circumstances, we cannot act solely under the law, but we need to explain so that the people will understand why certain action is taken," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government realised that the explanation was difficult to be accepted by some of the Muslims because PAS had succeeded in influencing many of the Malays "to the extent that they say white is black, black is white."

He said the move by RTM to air a video clip on lies told by PAS leaders were part of the efforts to explain and expose the lies of PAS leaders when speaking in political ceramahs.

Earlier, when speaking at a leader-with-the-people gathering in Marang, Dr Mahathir said PAS leaders and supporters, including PUM, had committed a big sin when they defended Nik Aziz's statement.

He said PUM was actually playing politics and "was a branch of PAS" to influence Muslims in the country.

"That's why they (PUM) are prepared to say Nik Aziz is Rabbani, what more to promote this man who said God uses obscene language, God is a gangster, God is a bigger gangster, this man is regarded by ulama in PUM as rabbani.

"It shows these people are really mad. They should see a psychologist as they have far deviated from Islamic teachings," he added.

-- BERNAMA

RAR SN TS