

PM: No action to be taken against Harakah

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said no action will be taken against PAS' news organ Harakah over the publication of his caricature side by side with that of a pig.

The Prime Minister said there was no point doing anything about it because PAS would continue with its act over and over again.

"This shows the level of mentality of PAS and its supporters. What can I say about people who say that even God curses and it is fitting for them to draw a picture of a pig," Dr Mahathir told reporters after chairing the Umho Supreme Council meeting at PWTC here last night.

He said although there was a call from the grassroots to study the matter, it was futile because retaliation meant that his mentality was at par with that of PAS.

Dr Mahathir also said that he had not heard of any apology from Harakah.

However, when told by newsmen that Harakah had apologised through a statement two days ago, Dr Mahathir asked:

"When did they apologise? They only spoke about the apology in the newspaper but I have yet to receive the official apology."

Earlier yesterday, Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had said the apology lacked sincerity and was only tendered to evade responsibility over the cartoon meant to mock Dr Mahathir.

"What is the use of apologising now when you know well beforehand that what you plan to do will hurt other people?"

"Now, after you have had a good time mocking Dr Mahathir through the caricature, you want to say sorry. That is meaningless," he said after launching a patriotic essay competition.

Abdullah said he did not understand how PAS that claimed to be an Islamic party could cross the boundaries of decency by portraying another Muslim in that manner.

"They claim to be an Islamic party. They talk about Islamic values, yet this

is what they do.

"This is intentional, how can they claim it's a mistake. Otherwise, the cartoon would not have been carried," he added.

At the assembly, Umno leaders asked Harakah to give a proper and

sincere apology.

They said the apology issued by chief editor Zulkifli Sulong was insufficient and done half-heartedly.

Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob demanded a written and clear-cut apology to Dr Mahathir.

"The damage is done and they know they have created the impact they wanted. We want more than an apology because they've really gone too far," he said.

He asked Harakah to give a written assurance to the Home Ministry that such an incident would not be repeated.

Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad said the apology was unacceptable.

"They went overboard with their antics. They are just trying to mock us, knowing that our general assembly is on," he said, adding that Umno members could not tolerate such an action.

Deputy Information Minister Datuk Zainuddin Maidin said it was the PAS leadership and not the chief editor who should apologise.

"The apology should come from the party if PAS leaders are sincere in wanting to apologise. The action of Harakah is reflective of the leadership," he added.

Umno executive secretary Datuk Tengku Adnan Mansor described PAS as having a "forked tongue" with different messages for Muslims and non-Muslims, adding that the cartoon was for the Malay audience, for whom the pig was a forbidden animal.

Umno Wanita chief Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said: "That is PAS. They are so bankrupt of political ideas that they are willing to stoop to the lowest level."

Puteri Umno chief Azalina Othman Said criticised the paper, saying: "Only weak people do things like that."



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