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Australia-Mahathir

AUSSIE NEWSPAPER READERS BACK DR MAHATHIR

MELBOURNE, Oct 21 (Bernama) -- Many Australians have rallied to back Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's speech to the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) which sparked an outcry from western nations.

Writing to the editors of newspapers in Australia, they said Dr Mahathir had a right to make his thoughts known to the world and some said his speech was taken out of context.

In a letter to The Australian newspaper, Ian Boyce, of the suburb of Prospect in Adelaide said: "Any anti-Jewish remark evokes a powerful response in our culture, as the spate of letters on Dr Mahathir attest."

"But it should be remembered that billions of people, not all of them Islamic, agree with him. Our interpretation of what is going on in the world is different from those who think that Israel is a bully.

"The image of boys slinging stones like David against Goliath, lives in the memory of many and Dr Mahathir knows it," he added.

Stating that the abuse that had been directed at Dr Mahathir was an overreaction, David Roberts, of the Melbourne suburb of Watsonia, said: "For Dr Mahathir to urge Muslims to use their brains, not bombs, is not unreasonable.

"This incident exposes a double standard in the media. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Muslims have suffered extensive abuse. Why are negative comments that are directed towards Judaism so much more unacceptable than negative comments directed at Islam?"

Indu Abeysekara, of the Perth suburb of Nedlands, had this to say: "Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad is certainly not very politically correct when he generalises about the Jewish people. But the media, politicians and letter writers who have expressed their outrage should reflect on certain truths.

"Europeans should be consumed with guilt over the Holocaust, the pogroms, and their bigoted attitude towards the Jewish people. However, it is very problematic when the West expects Third World nations, who have been subjected to colonisation, to take on the mantle of collective European guilt as well. They had no part in the crime.

"Mahathir therefore, is coming from a totally different perspective. He and his people do not carry any burden of guilt when it comes to Israel or the Jews. For them, Israel is the oppressor. It would have been nice if Dr Mahathir had chosen other words, but don't label him without doing some lateral thinking."

Jessica Gosnell, of Paradise in South Australia, said she was appalled at the response to Dr Mahathir's speech, adding that sections of the speech had been taken out of context.

"He is calling on Muslims to desist from bloodshed as it achieves nothing, except more hatred," she wrote to The Australian.

"He is asking Muslims to unite and use their heads. He also exhorts Muslims to get back to the true faith and become, as before, great scientists, scholars, physicians and astronomers. We should be extolling his message, not misinterpreting his words," she said.

-- BERNAMA

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