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Islam-Mahathir

MALAYSIA AN EYE-OPENER FOR ISLAMIC WORLD, SAYS AUSTRALIAN MUSLIM LEADER

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 26 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is a model for Islamic countries and its dynamic leadership is an eye-opener for the Muslim world where such leadership is lacking, according to an Australian Muslim leader.

Abdul Quddoos Al-Azhari, chairman of the Board of Imams of Australia, said today that he had met many Muslim leaders at last week's Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in Putrajaya, near here, and everyone recognised the great contributions Malaysia had made to the advancement of Islam throughout the world.

He said Malaysia's impressive success as a nation and in all fields, including technology and industrialisation, was evident for all the OIC leaders to see and the next three years of the country's leadership of the largest grouping of Islamic countries was "very timely".

"Allah has blessed Malaysia with quality and capable leadership in Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his successor Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. Such leadership is lacking in much of the Muslim world," he told Bernama here.

Abdul Quddoos, who attended the OIC summit as an observer, said: "Dr Mahathir has done a lot for the ummah (Muslim community). He is the only leader in the Muslim world who clearly defends Islam for he has the courage to speak up to tell the truth without hesitation or fear".

He expressed confidence that Abdullah would do just as well as a leader for the Muslim world when he takes over as prime minister on Friday when Dr Mahathir steps down after 22 years in office.

Abdul Quddoos, who is principal of the Darul Uloom Islamic Academy of Brisbane, said Abdullah visited the academy last year when he represented Dr Mahathir at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in Queensland.

"He even led Friday prayers at our mosque and delivered a sermon. This further strengthened ties between Muslims in our two countries.

"Muslims all over the world are looking at Malaysia as a model. They are imitating what Malaysia is doing. At the OIC summit, many Muslim leaders that I met were impressed with Malaysia's success and what it is doing for Islam", he said.

What set Malaysia apart from other Islamic countries was its "quality and capable" leadership, he said.

Abdul Quddoos said there was much that other Islamic countries could learn from Malaysia where Islam flourishes alongside modernisation and democracy.

"Although Islam was founded on highly democratic principles, sad to say, many Islamic countries do not have a democratic system of government," he said.

He said the new leadership in Malaysia under Abdullah and the country's chairmanship of the OIC following its summit would bring much-needed improvements to the grouping and the ummah "which now have an image problem".

He also thanked Malaysians for their generous contributions in the building of mosques and madrasah (religious schools) in Australia.

"Many mosques and madrasah throughout Australia have been built with some help from Malaysians, including businessmen. Malaysians who are living in Australia are also actively involved in religious activities.

" There are now more than half a million Muslims in Australia and the

number is growing," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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