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Abdullah-Winding (PAS)

PAS FRUSTRATES UMNO'S EFFORTS TO PROJECT ISLAM AS PROGRESSIVE, SAYS  
ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, June 21 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today PAS's narrow interpretation of Islam had frustrated Umno's efforts to project Islam in the country as a progressive and dynamic religion.

The Umno Deputy President said the "Islam" championed by PAS was still based on the classification made by the British, that was personal or 'fardu ain' in nature, with a narrow and very often deviated interpretation of the religion.

"The government and development brought by Umno and the Barisan Nasional are regarded as un-Islamic," he said when winding up the debate on the presidential address at the 54th Umno General Assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC), here.

"PAS is using Islam more as a means to gain political influence and support. This is a major challenge within the country that we must face firmly," said the Deputy Prime Minister.

Abdullah said that during the British colonial rule, they tried to weaken the Malays in a subtle way by promoting a narrow view and interpretation of Islam.

"This was done by placing Islamic matters, according to their understanding, under the power of the Malay rulers. Other matters regarded as non-Islamic and relating to the government, administration, security and defence were placed under their power.

"The British was comfortable with the approach to Islamic education that was confined to personal and family matters, religious obligations of the individuals and the community at large governing prayers, funeral rites, wedding and payment of 'zakat' (tithe) for padi.

"The Islamic development infrastructure provided did not help the Muslims to prepare themselves to face greater worldly matters in business, finance, science, technology, medicine and so on.

"The educational infrastructures only helped the Malay children to obtain limited education. That was the form of Islam encouraged so that the Malays would not achieve progress in terms of knowledge, skills and expertise," he said.

On the other hand, Abdullah said Umno had tried to project Islam since independence as a progressive and dynamic religion.

"The fardhu kifayah aspect had been widen to enable the Malays to compete in a modern world. Educational opportunity for the Malay children, including those from the rural, was also widen and was not confined to just West Asia.

"Umno strongly believes that Islam is a very effective force in making the Malays more dynamic and progressive," said Abdullah.

On the other hand, Abdullah said PAS had introduced values which destroyed the Malay identity through the promotion of culture of hatred.

"PAS planted the seeds of hatred among Muslims," he said.

He said in every PAS ceramah, there would be elements of defamation, hatred and character assassination.

"PAS leaders and members are proud and arrogance. They don't beg forgiveness, they don't admit mistakes and wrongdoings, they don't admit shortcomings and weaknesses, especially PAS leaders," he said.

He said there was no limit as to what PAS could do to another Muslims, for example the recent cartoon in Harakah, the official organ of PAS,

making a mockery of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Abdullah, who is also the Home Minister, said the government could revoke the publishing permit of the paper but he would leave it to God for retribution.

He also said Umno should be willing to provide places to those with integrity and fine character to ensure the party's victory in the next general election.

All Umno members should respect and implement every decision made by the party, he said.

"All Umno members should put aside their personal interest and give undivided support to anyone nominated by the party as a candidate," he said.

Abdullah said a united and discipline party members would bring success to Umno in the next general election.

He also stressed on the need for Umno to approach the young who formed the critical group among the new voters.

Abdullah reminded party members that their loyalty should be to the party and not to individuals.

"Every Umno member who suffers defeat will weaken our position. As such, we must ensure that none of them will be defeated. We will protect every Umno member because his victory will mean victory for the party and victory for the party means victory for all of us," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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