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Abdullah-Semitic

TACKLE SEMITIC ISSUE WITH UNDERSTANDING, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today that the anti-semitic issue should not be approached in a confrontational manner but should be tackled with a better understanding of the issue.

"We must not go on a confrontational course but rather have a better understanding of the issue," he said.

Abdullah told reporters this after chairing his first Umno supreme council meeting as acting president.

Asked whether former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement at the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) summit last month was viewed as confrontational, he said Dr Mahathir was only "explaining and making a reference to history."

At the summit, Dr Mahathir, who vacated his seat as prime minister last Friday, had said that Jews have become very powerful and now rule the world by proxy.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir was explaining what had happened to the Jews, who were persecuted before, and how successful they are today.

He said Dr Mahathir wanted Muslims to understand that "today you may be persecuted and there is profiling against Islam, so how do you respond?"

"You must respond with patience, understanding and with knowledge and you must strategise. Then only can you survive," he said.

He said he knew that Dr Mahathir was not anti-Jews but the Jews were not very happy with the way he had explained things.

On the rising anti-semitic sentiment in the Muslim and the Arab world, he said: "We are seeing this thing happening. If this is happening...it is going to lead us to confrontation between the two groups. That is not going to be good for anybody."

As such, it would be better to have a better understanding of this issue to avoid any confrontation, he said.

-- BERNAMA

SHO SR JK