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Mahathir-Winding Up (PAS)

UMNO MEMBERS MUST NEVER FEEL INTIMIDATED BY PAS, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 21 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Umno members should never feel intimidated by PAS as Umno is the party truly struggling for Islam.

The prime minister said: "Don't be afraid of people in robes and headgear, appearing to be learned in Islam...even those wearing skull caps have been known to have committed rape (committing great sin)."

Even though Umno members do not look like ulamas and the party does not use the word Islam, Umno struggles for Islam and Umno members were not less Islamic, the Umno president said when winding up the debate at the 54th Umno general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here.

Dr Mahathir, who spoke at length on the PAS threat, said that Umno members should be more focused in overcoming problems created by PAS from the opposition party's wrong interpretation of the teachings of Islam and their narrow-mindedness.

According to history, he said, PAS' formation had the blessings of the British colonialists as the party's objective was to weaken the Malays who were already united under Umno at that time.

"They (the colonialists) didn't ask the Malay Rulers whether they would consent to the setting up of PAS whereas the Rulers were responsible for religious matters," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the same tactic was resorted to by the colonialists to divide the Muslim community in India by according recognition to the teachings of Ahmad Qadiani, who claimed to be a prophet, as another Islamic ideology.

The colonialists also practised the same tactic in Pakistan to disunite the Muslims in that country, he said.

The prime minister said that the Malays, especially Umno members, should reject PAS as its struggles had deviated from the teachings of Islam.

"I don't understand why PAS supporters still accept their leaders who have unabashedly stated that God resorts to profanity and thuggery," he said.

Dr Mahathir threw a challenge to any ulama to prove the truth of the statement made by PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat.

Touching on the hudud (Islamic penal code) approved by the Terengganu state assembly, Dr Mahathir said: "We don't feel any guilt for rejecting it as it is PAS' hudud and not Islam's hudud."

The prime minister said that unlike Islam's hudud, PAS' hudud differ from that approved in Kelantan and the hudud passed in Terengganu.

According to Islam, he said, justice was most vital in meting out punishment but under PAS' hudud, there were many instances of injustice including against women who were rape victims.

He said that rape victims under PAS' hudud need to have four witnesses of impeccable character to prove their allegations.

"If four witnesses were to merely watch a woman being raped and not attempt to help her, would they not be regarded as having sinned (for allowing a woman to be raped) and are not be fit to be witnesses?" he said.

Under PAS' hudud also, rape victims would in turn become the accused in the event that she could not make the four witnesses available.

Nowadays, he said, there were many scientific means to prove allegations of rape including DNA tests on blood specimen and semen

samples.

Dr Mahathir said that the PAS law showed that PAS leaders including its acting president, Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang, does not have such an in-depth knowledge of Islam as they claimed.

He said that even though Umno struggled for Islam, the party does not wish to use the word Islam as PAS does.

"The Turkish Prime Minister (Recep Tayyip Erdogan), during his recent visit to the country, told me that his party does not use the word Islam for fear that if the party were to do something wrong, Islam will bear the brunt," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that the claim by PAS' top leaders that they were ulamas who are descendants of the Prophet, was also a political tactic so that they would get the support of the Muslim community.

"Ulamas who are descendants of the Prophet are those who make interpretations without any interests," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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