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TIMBER GIFT TO MUGABE DOES NOT INFRINGE GOVT GUIDELINES, SAYS
ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, July 19 (Bernama) -- The gift of some RM100,000 worth of timber given by former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe did not infringe government guidelines, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"As such, the government has no basis to prosecute former prime minister for the gift he gave to President Mugabe," the prime minister said in his written reply to Teresa Kok Suh Sim (DAP-Seputeh) during question time in the Dewan Rakyat here today.

He said timber which was used by Mugabe for panelling his residence was a gift from a head of state to another head of state and "...a normal thing in international diplomacy."

As such, Abdullah said the timber was viewed as a gift from the Malaysian government to President Mugabe in recognition of his position as the head of the Zimbabwean government.

He said although there were guidelines pertaining to gifts to be given to foreign leaders, there was none on the value of the gifts.

This would be up to the discretion of the palace or the Prime Minister's Department and did not require the approval of the Cabinet, he said.

-- BERNAMA
ASF HK ABG