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Abdullah-Terror

WAR ON TERROR BEING WON IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, July 24 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said that the war on terror in Southeast Asia is being won.

"I think we are winning that war...not completely, but we are watching very very carefully and we believe that soon we should see no more threat," he said in an interview over the BBC World News today.

Abdullah, who is currently visiting Britain, said the world would one day realise that Southeast Asia was a peaceful region.

"I'm not looking for a date to declare victory but when we achieve something and the whole world knows that the region is peaceful and that there are no more incidents that could be regarded as still a problem. that's the time people know that there's no more such problem," he said.

Abdullah said Malaysia had been able to contain the Jemaah Islamiah's (JI) activities but the movement was still not destroyed.

"I don't say that they are destroyed, but we are able to contain that," he said.

The prime minister said Malaysia and Indonesia viewed the JI problem differently, based on their own situation.

"But we know that there are some elements of this group (JI) still there in Indonesia and Indonesia is working hard to trace them," he said.

On a different note, Abdullah said the Malaysian government practised Islam based on moderation, respect for people of other religions and willingness to cooperate and share power.

This was the progressive Islam practised in the country, he said, adding: "Islam is progressive and not anti-progress...Islam shows the way to progress in all fields."

Abdullah said his predecessor, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, had declared Malaysia as an Islamic state and Malaysians of other religions had accepted

it without problem.

It was explained to them that Malaysia could be regarded as an Islamic country based on the recognition of its achievements all these years but this did not mean that non-Muslims were second-class citizens.

"There is no such thing as second-class citizens...we, the Muslims of Malaysia, are in Umno because Umno is the party of the Malays, but all Malays are Muslims and we are sharing power with people of other faiths and different ethnic origins.

"This sharing of power is very strong and we are totally committed to the sharing of power...we even agreed to put non-Muslim candidates in constituencies where there are Muslim voters and they won," he said.

Asked on the possibility that he might ask the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to pardon Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who had been convicted of corrupt practice and sodomy, Abdullah said he did not intend to interfere because this was the power of the King and involved judicial procedures.

-- BERNAMA

AFY KIA JK