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Pas inconsistent, say Dr M, Abdullah

A. Razak Ahmad; Marina Emmanuel

LANGKAWI, Wed. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today blasted Pas' inconsistencies in defining their Islamic state policy.

Both leaders said the inconsistencies proved that Pas had no intention of turning Malaysia into a theocratic state but was merely using the issue to fish for votes.

Dr Mahathir, the Umno president and Barisan Nasional chairman, said there was no need to discuss making Malaysia "Islamic" because the country was already a model Islamic state respected throughout the world.

His statement was echoed by Abdullah, who said it was apparent that Pas had no clear policy on how to make Malaysia an Islamic state.

Dr Mahathir, who was met after chairing the weekly Cabinet meeting at a resort in Gunung Raya, said contradictory statements by Pas leaders on the Islamic state issue also indicated a lack of political will by the opposition party to implement the Islamic laws they had promised.

"They use 'Islamic state' as an issue to fish for votes, but there is no sincerity to do anything.

"Why do we need (to discuss an Islamic state) ... because our country has been accepted by the world not only as an Islamic state, but as a model for other Islamic states.

"So what more do they (Pas) want?"

He said this when asked about comments by Pas vice-president Datuk Mustafa Ali on the party's Islamic state plans.

Mustafa, who was interviewed in the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Hardtalk programme, said an Islamic state was not an objective in the party's constitution.

Mustafa also said during the programme that the media used the term "Islamic state" to "frighten non-Muslims".

On the same day, Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang was reported to have said that Terengganu would gazette the Syariah Criminal Enactment (Hudud and Qisas) before November and would enforce the laws immediately.

Dr Mahathir was asked how Mustafa's comments during the programme seemed to indicate a lack of consistency since the party had long propagated its intention to turn the country into a theocratic state.

"They have not been consistent from before. Even in terms of (the party name), the name is 'Islamic party', but this party, if we examine, is not Islamic whatsoever, because they say God uses foul language, they castigate others and they slander. Is this Islam?"

Dr Mahathir said unlike Pas, political parties in Muslim countries elsewhere were often reluctant to use "Islam" in their names.

"They do not like to mix the word Islam in their names, because when they do anything bad that is against the teachings of Islam, people will say 'that is Islam'."

Abdullah, who was also asked on the matter later at the same venue, said:

"Mustafa says Pas has no plans to amend the (Federal) constitution, but Terengganu Menteri Besar said the party wanted to implement hudud, which would be placed under the Criminal Procedure Code.

"In the constitution, there are provisions dealing with crimes for all States and not limited to certain ones."

Abdullah said the so-called "hudud" which Terengganu wanted to implement

was causing problems as it contradicted the constitution.

"If we follow Mustafa's interview and the action taken by Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang, there are clearly contradictions.

"What's clear to me is that Pas has no definite policy."

Abdullah said the inconsistencies showed Pas' tactics of making different and at times contradicting promises to different audiences in their efforts to secure support.

"Pas campaigns for support from Muslims in one way, but when facing non-Muslims and the international community, like the BBC, they will say quite a different thing," he said.