

Karpal: Dr M's Islamic state declaration 'mischievous'

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By Susan Loone

DAP national chairperson Karpal Singh has taken former premier Mahathir Mohamad to task for being 'mischievous' in saying he is not 'haram' (illegal in the eyes of Islam) as he has declared Malaysia an Islamic state.

Karpal - who is DAP's most vocal critic on the issue - said Mahathir's declaration in September 2001 - ahead of the Sarawak state election that year - was devoid of any legal backing.

He added that he had then contravened the five-bench declaration of the Supreme court in 1988 that Malaysia is a secular state.

In the 1988 decision, former Lord president Salleh Abas had said: "However, we have to set aside our personal feelings because the law in this country is still what it is today, secular law..."

"Only a secular state can have secular laws. For Mahathir to declare Malaysia an Islamic state in face of this declaration is mischievous," said the Bukit Gelugor MP in Penang today.

"When saying thus, Mahathir has contradicted the first three prime ministers who have publicly asserted that the country was (and is) a secular state," he added.

DAP, unbelievers hostile to Islam?

Karpal was responding to Mahathir's claims that he is not anti-Islam for not implementing hudud when in power, as he had in his time declared Malaysia an Islamic state.

Mahathir's remarks came in the wake of statements by several Islamic scholars in the country who hold that it is haram to support DAP as the party rejects hudud law, and its members accused of being "unbelievers hostile to Islam" (kafir hasbi).

Karpal said Mahathir had also then gone on to say that Malaysia was a "fundamentalist Islamic state".

He added that the statement was "a long way from the truth", reminding Mahathir that it is best not to issue such comments without any basis.

He advised the former premier, who stepped down as PM in 2003, to "retire gracefully, and not interfere unnecessarily" in the affairs of the state.

"DAP's position - which we have emphasised time and again - is clear.

"We do not accept an Islamic state as that would be inconsistent with the federal constitution," said Karpal, a well-established legal eagle in the country.

"It would be an open defiance of the Federal Constitution and an act of non-acceptance of the 1988 Supreme Court rule," he stressed.

In 2001, DAP had split from Barisan Alternatif, a loose coalition of opposition parties, with PAS and PKR as its partners, over the Islamic state issue.

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