

Dr M: Party reps should not sit in hudud committee
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Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants the national technical committee on the implementation of hudud to consist of independent religious scholars rather than representatives from Umno and PAS.

The ex-premier said this is to avoid a prejudicial view towards the committee and to ensure that the implementation of hudud does not benefit a certain party.

"The main thing is to have proper religious persons who are not involved in politics who will study this matter and give a fatwa (opinion). But not those who are obviously making use of hudud to win votes," he added.

On Friday, it was reported that Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir Baharom and Kelantan Deputy Menteri Besar Mohd Amar Nik Abdullah met over the formation of the technical committee.

Mahathir admitted that there is a lot of controversy in the implementation of hudud, as people do not know about its interpretation or how it should be applied.

"I hope the controversy will help people understand what hudud is all about and how it is applied in a multiracial and multi-religious society," he said.

On whether MCA's opposition towards hudud will break-up BN, Mahathir does not think it would affect the ruling coalition.

"Umno believes hudud as one that is found in the Quran and hadith. But when it is used by a political party (PAS) they are bound to interpret it in a bias manner...," he said.

Mahathir was talking to reporters after observing the Syariah Court proceedings against scholar Kassim Ahmad who is faced with three charges of not respecting the sanctity of Islam.

He was there with his daughter Marina.

Meanwhile, Mahathir also said that Islam is a merciful religion and this should be taken into consideration in all circumstances.

This was seen as defending Kassim since the former premier had previously expressed regret over the charge brought against the 81-year-old scholar.

"The use of religion for political purposes is something to be regretted. Religion should be used for the administering of religious laws on Muslims but when religion is used for winning votes, that is regrettable," Mahathir said.

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