

Mahathir: Hudud not for Malaysia
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Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamed today lashed out against the idea of implementing hudud laws in the country, arguing that it is simply unacceptable.

Speaking during a question-and-answer session after delivering his speech on separation of powers in Putrajaya, he said that the country would face problems if the Islamic criminal law is carried out although in the Quran - the Muslim holy book - justice is clearly spelled out.

Mahathir said this in response to a question posed by a representative from a Malay NGO Prowaris (Pertubuhan Professional Melayu dan Pewaris Bangsa) who praised Mahathir as a leader who helped advance Islamic professional fields during his tenure.

"Do you think now is the time, in order to unite Muslim Malays, for hudud laws to be implemented in this country?" he was asked.

Mahathir, in his usual tongue-in-cheek manner replied: "Then what should the other races do to unite themselves? What would the Chinese do? What would the Indians do? Well, the Indians have Hindraf (Hindu Rights Action Force) now."

Shifting back to the topic, he said there are 43 verses in the Quran stating clearly about justice. However, there are differences between crime and punishment when it comes to hudud laws.

'Misunderstanding regarding hudud laws'

"There is a misunderstanding regarding the hudud laws. (They think) the most important part of it is the process of accusing and (carrying out) judgment. But the Quran has 43 verses in regards to justice but this were not discussed in depth.

"For example, there are two people found stealing. One is a non-Muslim Chinese, one is Muslim Malay. Would you cut off the Malay's hand and give a two-month jail sentence to the Chinese? If that's not justice, then it is not Islamic," he said.

The former prime minister also noted that a problem would arise if a rape victim could not produce four witnesses with good characters for her defence in accusing the rapist.

"But how could the four become the witnesses if they did not do anything when the rapist raped her? I'd say, why are they not helping her instead?" he said, drawing laughter from the crowd.

"If the victim could not produce four witnesses, the rapist could get away and she would be whipped for making false accusations," Mahathir said.

He also said that four witnesses with good characters may be difficult to find in any

situation.

'Think carefully about hudud laws'

"I myself could be deemed not to have a good character. You also could be deemed not to have it as well. Then, how could you find four witnesses with good characters?"

"Think carefully about hudud laws, don't just ask for it to be (implemented in the country)," he said.

Mahathir's views on hudud laws could be seen as an attack on PAS which has been mooted the idea of hudud laws if it takes over the federal government.

On a different note, Mahathir remained critical as he shifted his focus on his successor and former premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who was appointed as Malaysian Airlines (MAS) adviser yesterday.

"I was (also) appointed adviser for Petronas and Proton. Until I have vacated this place, he has to be put somewhere (else)," he told the press conference.

"I also asked to be made adviser to MAS but I didn't get it. Maybe, it's because I'm not too qualified," he said with his trademark sarcasm.

When asked if Abdullah will be able to effect changes in MAS, he merely replied: "He was chosen as the prime minister, people get what they deserve."

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