

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	26/08/2017C

HADI BLAMES FORMER LEADER

NST- 26/8/2017 PS.7

Tragedy a misdeed against Islam, and cops were forced to act against villagers, says Pas leader

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Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang during a press conference at Masjid Rusila in Marang yesterday. PIC BY MOHD SYAFIQ RIDZUAN AMBAK

PAS president Datuk Seri Hadi Awang has pinned the blame on one of the country's former leaders for causing the deadly Memali incident in 1985, which left 18 people dead.

Without revealing names, Hadi described the tragedy as a misdeed against Islam, and that the police personnel tasked to lay siege on the village of Memali were "forced" to act against

villagers there.

He said the religious group had an obligation to defend the sanctity of Islam.

He said according to the Islamic concept of *maqasid syariah*, misdeeds against religion were worse than financial wrongdoings.

"When there is a dispute on religious matters, it is not the duty of the police to sort it out.

"Religious authorities should have been sent to Memali, not the police," Hadi said yesterday.

The Memali incident involved a clash between authorities moving in to arrest Pas figure Ibrahim Mahmud and villagers defending the latter.

The issue resurfaced after a question on the controversy was thrown to former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad dur-

ing Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia's Nothing to Hide 2.0 forum in Shah Alam earlier this month.

The Memali incident took place during Dr Mahathir's tenure as prime minister.

After the forum, calls were made by several quarters, including Pas, for the establishment of a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) to investigate the Memali incident.

On Wednesday, DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang had urged Hadi to testify during the RCI, if it was formed, and explain the impact of the controversial "Amanat Hadi" (Hadi's Address) in 1981.

Former inspector-general of police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor had claimed that the address, which revolved around holy war and martyrdom, had an influence on the Pas members involved in the Memali incident.

Hadi, however, explained that he was directed by Pas at the time to clarify issues relating to

infidels, as well as to counter *Mustika Hadis*, a book published by the Islamic division of the Prime Minister's Department.

"The Pas leadership had tasked me to prepare a research paper titled '*Batas-batas Iman dan Ku-fur*' to ensure Pas members did not get trapped in issues related to infidels."

In a press conference yesterday, Hadi said only excerpts of his address were widely circulated, not the entire speech.

"To my understanding, my 'Amanat Hadi' speech was scrutinised by the authorities, including the Islamic Religious Council, which was chaired by (then home minister) Tun Musa Hitam.

"They found nothing wrong with it."

He said after listening to the audiotape of his address, many had come forward to apologise to him after initially blaming him for the Memali incident.

