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Musa: Memali RCI should be apolitical

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'Inquiry should only be held after GE14'

PETALING JAYA: There is "no problem" with having a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) look into the Memali incident as long as it is done with the right intentions, said Tun Musa Hitam.

What must be scrutinised is the suitability of the timing and the proceedings, he said.

He said its objectives should not be to "fulfil political agendas" or go to "the point where truth is sacrificed and it deviates from the facts".

The RCI must be free of prejudice in its fact-finding mission and should be based on the Federal Constitution as well as the country's laws, he said in a statement yesterday.

Musa, who was deputy prime minister from 1981 to 1986 under Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, also suggested that the RCI be held only after the 14th General Election (GE14).

This would prevent the 1985 Memali incident from being used for political gain or vote-baiting, he said.

As it happened nearly 32 years ago, with little action taken since, except for the distribution of a White Paper in Parliament, Musa said he did not see any reason to rush with the RCI at this time.

"I am confident that all truly serious and honest parties which want to know the background and true story behind the incident will agree to the RCI being postponed until GE14 is over.

"I myself truly regret that the incident is a black spot in our history. That's why the investigation or hunt for information must be con-

ducted in a calm and focused manner, without bias or prejudice," said Musa.

Meanwhile, PAS said its president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang should be called to testify if the RCI is set up.

PAS secretary-general Datuk Takiyuddin Hassan said this would allow Hadi to give his account of the incident.

He chided former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor for raising the issue, saying that he should not try to interfere with the process.

Rahim drew the ire of PAS leaders on Tuesday when he asked why the Islamist party wanted the RCI as it would implicate Hadi.

Rahim alleged that Hadi's speech in April 1981, better known as "Amanat Hadi", had inspired PAS members and religious teachers such as Ibrahim Mahmud to oppose Umno and Barisan Nasional.

On Nov 19, 1985, 18 people - among them four policemen - were killed and many others injured after police launched an operation to arrest Ibrahim for alleged deviant teachings.

Policemen and villagers of Kampung Memali in Kedah clashed when several residents tried to prevent the teacher, popularly known as Ibrahim Libya, from being arrested under the then Internal Security Act. The Act was repealed in 2012.

Musa was blamed for the deaths because he was acting prime minister at the time of the incident.