

**Barisan Nasional Government Upholds Islam In This Country - Shafie
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SEMPORNA, June 24 (Bernama) - Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal has refuted claims that the Barisan Nasional (BN) government does not uphold Islam in this country.

The Rural and Regional Development Minister said Umno as the backbone of BN government had been upholding the sanctity of Islam long before the country gained independence from colonial rule.

"Islam was made the official religion in the Umno constitution. When the country gained independence, we made Islam the official religion in the federal constitution while other religions may be practised freely," he said after closing a haj programme here Sunday.

Shafie said the BN government had used the power at hand to enhance Islam's position as the official religion but did not dare to use Islam for political interests.

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