

Umno Continues To Uphold Islam
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 1 (Bernama) -- How Islam has been identified with an opposition party is best summed up by a story often told by a speaker.

He said some Malays including Umno members were reluctant to exclaim the "takbir" (uttering 'Allah is Great' repeatedly) for fear of being labelled as supporters of an opposition party.

This old thinking is wrong as exclaiming the 'takbir' is not exclusive to a certain party, just like wearing the white turban.

It is because of this confusion that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had said on several occasions that the struggle of the Umno-led federal government was based on Islam under the Maqasid Al-Syariah concept (objectives and rationale of syariah).

Umno's struggle to uphold Islam is not new as it has been going on for a long time and will continue despite the opposition's efforts to deny this fact.

The government's policy is to preserve and empower Islam but at the same time, it respects the human rights of Muslims and non-Muslims.

"We never marginalise or ignore Islam as our struggle is demanded by Islam," said Najib at a function recently.

It has been said that the claim by certain quarters that Umno does not defend Islam is unreasonable and shallow-minded indeed.

They are blind to the fact that Umno made Islam the religion of the federation as stated in the Federal Constitution, rendering its position higher than that of official religion.

Umno, the country's biggest party has defended Islam continuously since the country's independence 55 years ago, and not just only recently.

Clause 3 of the Umno constitution states that the party was formed to uphold Malay nationalism so as to protect the dignity and honour of the race, religion and country.

Clause 3.2 states it is Umno responsibility's to uphold, defend and propagate Islam, and to respect the principle of freedom of religion.

These two main points are stated in the Umno constitution. So where is the truth about claims that Umno rejects Islam?

Claims that Umno members are unIslamic are made as the opposition has run out of ideas to erode the confidence of the Malays in Umno.

With the general election approaching, the opposition is desperate as there are signs that support of the Malay Muslims have returned to Umno.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom had said that PAS' claim of Umno not upholding but exploiting Islam for political gain was a lie to mislead the people.

Is it unIslamic for Umno, which works relentless, to fulfil its promises to the people? Is PAS more Islamic for only paying lip service?

There's a lot of proof of Umno's struggles and noble deeds for Islam, through the Barisan Nasional government, such as the establishment of the International Islamic University (IIUM), Tabung Haji, zakat institutions and the emphasis on Islamic education in primary and secondary schools and universities.

Islamic values are also inculcated in government administration and many religious infrastructure projects nationwide, including 7,112 mosques and 640 surau, had been built by the government through the Malaysia Islamic Development Department (Jakim).

Besides infrastructure development, Jakim is also responsible for carrying out efforts aimed at character building and human capital development, which includes improving the lot of the religious teachers and officers.

In January 2011, the allowance for over 32,000 Kafa teachers was increased from RM500 to RM800 while 14,254 imam were given an allowance of RM800.

A sum of RM11.5 million was allocated for repairing, upgrading and maintaining mosques while RM20 million was allocated for the construction and upgrading of surau in the rural areas.

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