

Full Statement By Tun Musa Hitam Pertaining To Memali Incident Bernama

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KUALA LUMPUR, April 4 (Bernama) -- Following is the full media statement issued by former Deputy Prime Minister Tun Musa Hitam concerning his remarks on the Memali incident at the discourse organised by the Kelantan state government on March 27 themed 'Malaysian Politics: Now and Then'.

At 9.00 pm on March 27, 2014, I, together with (PAS vice-president) YB Husam Musa were panelists in the discourse organised by the Kelantan state government themed 'Malaysian Politics: Now and Then'.

Professor Agoes from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia was the Moderator. The format of the discussion was similar to BBC London's television programme HARDTalk which prohibits panelists from using scripts or notes but to be prepared to answer whatever questions posed by the moderator.

Throughout the two-hour discourse, the Moderator was combative, aggressive and provocative. At the same time, I admit that he had displayed a fair, non-aligned and non-partisan attitude.

Towards the end of the discourse, I was asked questions about the Memali incident, which I inferred revolved on three main issues, which are:

1. My confirmation that on the day of the Memali incident, (the then Prime Minister) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad was in China and that I was the Acting Prime Minister.
2. I was fully responsible for the incident.
3. My feelings about the Memali incident.

"I gave my responses to the questions based on these four aspects:

1. I reprimanded the Moderator by saying that as a Professor, what he says must be based on in-depth research and accurate facts.
2. One the day of the Memali incident (Nov 19, 1985), Dr Mahathir was in Kuala Lumpur and I was not the Acting Prime Minister.

The Moderator showed a reaction of shock and in a clear voice, said 'My God', which also shocked the audience.

3. As the Home Minister then, I had outlined a general guide, issued a reminder and instructed the police on two things:

- (i) The law must be complied with; and
- (ii) Avoid violence and bloodshed.

I assumed responsibility and accountability over what had happened although I was not directly involved in the incident, but (I) left it to the discretion of the police to undertake the operation, in terms of determining the best time, method and approach to carry it out.

4. I admit with frankness, sincerity and with full realisation that the black mark in my political career is the Memali incident.

During the timeframe given by the moderator, I had explained the sequence of events.

On the day of the incident, the then acting Inspector-General of Police (IGP) and I had met with Dr Mahathir at his office and that the acting IGP had briefed him on what had happened following the police operation in Memali, which had resulted in the deaths of four policemen and 14 civilians.

At the meeting, I asked Dr Mahathir to postpone a China visit on three grounds:

1. The incident occurred in Kedah, the home state of the prime minister;
2. The incident involved Malays who professed Islam; and
3. By postponing the visit to China, Dr Mahathir would have portrayed that he had given priority to and showed concern for an incident that happened in the country.

Dr Mahathir insisted on going to China but I made known my suggestion to table (a report on) the Memali incident in Parliament.

Besides, I also asked for all media, including foreign media, to give me 24 hours to get a more accurate and comprehensive information about the incident.

I tabled (the report on) the Memali incident in the Dewan Rakyat on the following day (Nov 20, 1985) and convened a meeting with the media.

In summary:

1. It was not my intention to trigger new polemics in relation to Memali. It was revived following my response to a question posed by a moderator at the discourse.

2. The MAIN ISSUE in this matter is the fact that whether or not on the day of the incident I was the Acting Prime Minister because Tun Dr Mahathir was abroad. Based on my research from reference sources, it is clear that Tun Dr Mahathir was in the country, and that I was not the Acting Prime Minister on the day of the Memali incident.

3. During the court proceedings of my lawsuit against a writer a few years ago, in which I won, (Tun Dr Mahathir was still in power then), my lawyer asked two similar questions, whether Dr Mahathir was in the country on the day of the Memali incident and whether I was Acting Prime Minister. My answers were consistent that he was in the country and I was not Acting Prime Minister. However, none of the media reported this.

All this while, I had been insulted, condemned and held in contempt over the incident by various quarters, particularly PAS. As far as I can recall, what more after I had stepped down from the ministerial post, no one from the government or even from Umno, of which I am a member, was prepared to come out with the truth.

I had offered to attend an exclusive interview with the media specially on the subject of the Memali incident, but no media was willing to interview me. I realise and understand that at that time no one was prepared to face the risk of talking about matters that could be assumed as having a bearing on the position and person of a prime minister in power.

All this while, I had been alone in my quest to get justice, but I kept praying and, finally, the discourse in Kelantan came up which I regard as God's answer to my prayers.

I realised that the latest development had drawn various positive and even negative comments and views, not least in the form of fresh accusations, allegations and slander against me.

I leave everything to God, the All-Knowing, as He knows the truth and I seek His guidance and justice.

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