

Musa Hitam Claims He Was Not Acting PM On The Day Of Memali Incident

Bernama

4 Apr, 2014

KUALA LUMPUR, April 4 (Bernama) -- Tun Musa Hitam Friday claimed he was not the acting prime minister on the day of the Memali incident in 1985 because the then prime minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, was in the country at the time.

Musa, a former deputy prime minister, said that on that day, Nov 19, 1985, he and the then acting Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Mohd Amin Osman met Dr Mahathir at his office and Mohd Amin briefed him on what had happened.

The briefing was on the police operation in Memali, which had resulted in the deaths of four policemen and 14 civilians, he said in a statement issued in Kuala Lumpur.

"At the meeting, I asked Dr Mahathir to postpone a China visit on three grounds: the incident occurred in Kedah, the home state of the prime minister; the incident involved Malays who professed Islam.

"(And) 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," he said.

In the incident on Nov 19, 1985, eighteen people, among them four policemen, were killed and many others were injured after the police launched an operation to arrest a religious teacher, Ibrahim Mahmud, who was popularly known as Ibrahim Libya.

(According to media reports, the clash between the police and the villagers of Kampung Memali occurred when the residents tried to prevent the arrest of Ibrahim Libya under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for allegedly having engaged in deviant teachings.)

Musa said he made known his suggestion to table (a report on) the Memali incident in Parliament to Dr Mahathir who, at that time, insisted on going to China.

"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," he said. Musa, who was the home minister then, said he assumed responsibility and accountability over what had happened although he 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.

"As the home minister (then), I outlined a general guide, issued a reminder and instructed the police on two things, (namely) that the law must be complied with and they should avoid violence and bloodshed," he said.

Musa said it was not his intention to trigger new polemics in relation to Memali, but this was revived following his response to a question posed by a moderator at a discourse organised by the Kelantan state government on March 27 this year.

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

Musa said he 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 him.

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

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2014 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=1028014>