

Have religious scholars, not politicians on hudud committee, says Dr Mahathir
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Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants the national technical committee on the implementation of hudud to comprise independent religious scholars rather than representatives from Umno and PAS, the Malaysiakini news portal reported today.

The report cited Dr Mahathir as saying that this would avoid a prejudicial view towards the committee and ensure that the implementation of hudud did not benefit only one party.

"The main thing is to have proper religious persons who are not involved in politics who will study this matter and give a fatwa (opinion). But not those who are obviously making use of hudud to win votes," the news portal quoted him as saying today.

Dr Mahathir said this after attending the Kuala Lumpur Shariah Court proceedings against scholar Kassim Ahmad who is faced with three charges of not respecting the sanctity of Islam.

His comments followed a meeting last Friday between Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom and Kelantan Deputy Menteri Besar Mohd Amar Nik Abdullah over the formation of the technical committee to oversee details of the hudud implementation.

The report said Dr Mahathir had admitted that there were many controversies surrounding the implementation of hudud, as people do not know about its interpretation or how it should be applied.

"I hope the controversies will help people understand what hudud is all about and how it is applied in a multiracial and multi-religious society," he was quoted as saying in the report.

The report said Dr Mahathir did not think hudud will break up the Barisan Nasional government.

"Umno believes hudud as one that is found in the Quran and hadith. But when it is used by a political party (PAS), they are bound to interpret it in a bias manner..." he was quoted as saying in the news report.

Commenting on the charge against Kassim, Dr Mahathir said that Islam is a merciful religion and this should be taken into consideration in all circumstances.

"The use of religion for political purposes is something to be regretted. Religion should be used for the administering of religious laws on Muslims but when religion is used for winning votes, that is regrettable," Dr Mahathir was quoted as saying in the report. – May 6, 2014.

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