

## **Destroying Cultural Heritage A Disgust - Muhyiddin**

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**From Muin Abdul Majid**

PARIS, April 15 (Bernama) -- The increased destruction of cultural heritage due to social, religious and cultural unrest in certain societies has drawn a rebuke from Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who vowed that Malaysia would continue to advocate the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage.

The deputy prime minister said this would be in line with the continued priority given to the matter in the agenda of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

"While we endeavour to preserve and share the richness of cultures worldwide, we view with great sadness and disgust the untoward destruction of art, artifacts and documents that are part of our collective history, identity and civilisation," he said.

Muhyiddin, who is on a three-day working visit to Paris, said this in his remarks at the Malaysian Intangible Cultural Heritage Gala Show held at the UNESCO headquarters in Place de Fontenoy, Tuesday night.

It was organised in conjunction with the opening earlier by Muhyiddin of the Malaysian Intangible Cultural Heritage exhibition, an event drawn up to showcase Malaysia's heritage and elevate the country's profile as it vies to be on the UNESCO executive board for the 2015-2019 term.

The April 14-16 exhibition highlights Malaysian batik, beadwork, weaving, heritage food, Mah Meri wood carving, shadow play, customs and traditions, woven fabric and traditional games.

Muhyiddin pointed out that the diversity and convergence of all cultures were an irreplaceable source of intellectual richness.

"It's a record of our shared past and a way of understanding ourselves and each other. Therefore, the destruction of art and artifacts represents an attack on our history, identity and civilisation," the deputy prime minister said.

He cautioned that there would be a challenging task ahead to reconstruct a peaceful life with a shared sense of purpose which should be actively promoted as an essential aspect of the development of nations.

Muhyiddin stressed that the significance of art and culture was omnipresent as it was the very manifestation of civilisation.

"It's also, in the Malaysian context, a bastion of tolerance and mutual understanding where

diversity is acknowledged, respected and celebrated," he said.

Muhyiddin described being a member of the World Heritage Committee as "a priceless recognition" for Malaysia as it was a platform to contribute in preserving and conserving the world's heritage.

Furthermore, the assimilation and integration of the various ethnic cultures in Malaysia had produced a unique and distinct flavour that made 'Malaysia, Truly Asia', he said, alluding to the tagline made famous worldwide through the Malaysian tourism campaign.

"They represent a cultural heritage that we intend to preserve for future generations and one that we would like to share with the world," he added.

Attending the gala show with the theme 'Malaysian Heritage: Yesterday, Today and Beyond Tomorrow' was the last item on Muhyiddin's itinerary in Paris.

He is expected to be in Geneva on Wednesday morning for the second and final leg of his UNESCO-related visit to the two European countries.

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