

**Laws To Prevent Seditious Statements Important To Be Maintained - Muhyiddin
Bernama
Oct 27, 2014**

MELAKA, Oct 27 (Bernama) -- It is important for laws to prevent incitement such as the Sedition Act be maintained to enable the authorities to take stern action against any quarters who made statements which hurt the feelings of the country's multiracial and multireligious society.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin who said this, stated that even if the Act were to be amended, the amendments should strengthen the role of the Act in protecting important matters that were enshrined in the Federal Constitution and in preventing seditious actions from becoming rampant.

"I welcome the views of many parties including former Chief Justice Tun Abdul Hamid Mohamad who wants the Act to be improved by including a provision on Islam so that its position as the federal religion would not be wantonly questioned by irresponsible parties." Muhyiddin said this in his speech when opening the 15th Malay World Islamic World (DMDI) Convention with the theme, 'Moderation the Foundation of Unity of the Ummah', here, tonight.

Also present were Melaka Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Mohd Khalil Yaakob, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Idris Haron and DMDI president Tan Sri Mohd Ali Rustam.

Muhyiddin said the Act should also protect other religions from being insulted by any quarters.

He said the government's experience in managing race relations in Malaysia all this while showed the existence of comprehensive laws in curbing seditious actions, which was important to preserve peace and harmony.

"Laws such as this (Sedition Act) are control mechanisms used as a last resort when certain parties cast aside compromise and racial tolerance, which have been the foundation for unity in this country.

"In fact, other countries with a plural society such as Singapore have the same law and until today they don't intend to abolish it," he said.

The deputy prime minister said the views of some quarters that the existence of the law (Sedition Act) suppressed freedom of expression was incorrect.

"We should be wise in differentiating freedom of expression from seditious statements. Freedom of expression in a civilised society should be used to urge the people to remain united and to live in harmony, not making remarks that hurt the feelings of others which could cause conflict and disunity," he said.

Muhyiddin said the principle of wasatiyyah or moderation placed importance on justice and equality among people, which was the best formula to preserve peace and harmony in a multiracial society like Malaysia.

He said the acceptance of diversity could only be realised if society could reject extremist attitudes whether in religious or communal practices.

Muhyiddin said Malaysia had been practising the principle of moderation in maintaining harmony since a long time ago, with its people always prepared to tolerate and compromise in matters involving racial and religious interests.

"However, several developments happening of late, particularly involving issues that touch on racial and religious sensitivities have required Malaysians to appreciate and imbibe again the spirit of tolerance which have been existing in this country," he said.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2014 BERNAMA

Source :<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=1080072>