

## **Mahathir says almost impossible to implement ICERD**

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**From Mohd Iswandi Kasan Anuar**

PORT MORESBY (Papua New Guinea), Nov 18 (Bernama) – Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) would entail amending the Federal Constitution, and this is an almost impossible thing to do.

The Malaysian prime minister pointed out that a two-thirds parliamentary majority was needed for this to happen.

This, he said, was nearly impossible with the current composition of the Dewan Rakyat from the government and the reaction shown over the matter from the opposition as well as members of government.

"Only with the support from the opposition can we have a two-thirds majority, and even then government members themselves may not support (it). So I feel that it's almost impossible for us to achieve the two-thirds majority necessary (to amend the constitution)," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to Malaysian media at the conclusion of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) 2018 meeting here.

It was reported that Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir and Youth and Sports Minister Syed Saddiq Abdul Rahman had expressed reservations about ICERD, as opposition parties planned to organise a joint rally next month against a proposed ratification of the convention.

Dr Mahathir acknowledged that ICERD was sensitive to Malaysia's Malay community and

that the government was not rejecting the views expressed by the people on the matter.

"This matter is sensitive to the Malays, we understand that. In my speech at the United Nations (general assembly), I mentioned about the complexity of implementing ICERD. So, we didn't commit that we are going to do it," he said.

UMNO president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said yesterday that the Malay-Muslim community would "run amok" to protest the Pakatan Harapan government's pledge to ratify ICERD.

To this, the prime minister said: "Unless Zahid stirs up trouble, there will be no riot (over ICERD)."

Dr Mahathir also touched on the importance of education as well as digital technology and e-commerce to generate further business and growth among APEC members.

"One of the most important things in APEC is that we are equal members but we're not equal in terms of development. Unless there is proper understanding of new technologies on the part of the countries which are behind, the disparity might worsen," he said.

Dr Mahathir underscored the importance of internship schemes to better prepare graduates for the job market.

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