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MAHATHIR-MANDELA

(EMBARGO) FOR RELEASE AFTER 0001 HOURS TOMOROW, JULY 18)

KUALA LUMPUR, JULY 17 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY SAID THE DELAY IN RELEASING AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC) PRESIDENT NESLON MANDELA WOULD DEEPEN RACIAL CONFLICT IN SOUTH AFRICA.

THE PRIME MINISTER URGED THE PRETORIA REGIME TO RELEASE MANDELA AND OTHER POLITICAL LEADERS IMMEDIATELY AND NEGOTIATE WITH THE ANC FOR A DEMOCRATICALLY-ELECTED GOVERNMENT.

IN A STATEMENT ISSUED BY WISMA PUTRA IN CONJUNCTION WITH MANDELA'S 70TH BIRTHDAY, HE SAID THE WHITE MINORITY REGIME MUST REALISE THE RELEASE OF MANDELA WAS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS PEACE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIANS PREFERRED A SOUTH AFRICA WHERE PEOPLE FROM ALL RACIAL GROUPS ENJOYED JUSTICE, FREEDOM, EQUAL POLITICAL RIGHTS AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS.

THE CURRENT INTRANSIGENCE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN WHITE MINORITY AND INTRODUCTION OF DRACONIAN LAWS, AMONG OTHER THINGS, DID NOT AUGER WELL FOR THE FUTURE, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MANDELA'S PATIENCE AND CONTINUED COMMITMENT TO A MULTI-RACIAL SOUTH AFRICA BASED ON DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES NOT ONLY REFLECTED A PRAGMATIC APPROACH BUT ALSO CONVICTION FOR THE CAUSE OF HIS FREEDOM STRUGGLE FOR HIS PEOPLE.--
BERNAMA

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