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Mahathir-Bosnia

MALAYSIA WILL SEND TROOPS TO BOSNIA WITH CONDITIONS

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from Ali Mamat

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BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Aug 3 (Bernama) -- Malaysia wants certain conditions met before sending its troops to join the United Nations forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Among the conditions were that the existing UN troops there be maintained and that adequate air cover and the necessary logistics be provided for the Malaysian troops, he said.

"We do not want to send our troops there to be slaughtered," he told reporters at Istana Darut Taqwa, near here, at the end of his three-day official visit to Brunei.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on press reports yesterday that the UN had agreed to allow troops from three Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) countries -- Malaysia, Pakistan and Jordan -- to send their troops to join the UN forces in war-torn Bosnia.

The OIC had earlier offered about 20,000 troops from member nations to serve in Bosnia. Of this, Malaysia had expressed its willingness to send 1,500 troops. -- more

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Mahathir-Bosnia 2 (last) Bandar Seri Begawan

Dr Mahathir said that if the UN troops which were already there withdrew from Bosnia and left Malaysian troops in the frontline to face the Serbs, Malaysia believed this was not meant to help Bosnia "but to punish us for talking a lot."

"If it wants us to go there the UN must provide the air cover and logistics and it cannot withdraw the UN troops which are already there because we will be there to help the UN save the Bosnians, not to attack or fight with the Serbs," he said.

He said Malaysia's aim in offering its troops was to defend the Bosnians. -- Bernama

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