

CNS5780

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Troops-Bosnia

MALAYSIAN TROOPS FOR BOSNIA IN HIGH SPIRITS

SUNGAI PETANI, Sept 25 (Bernama) -- The prospects of the biting cold and a high-risk mission appear to have no effect on the glowing spirits of the Malaysian troops who will be leaving for war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina to serve under the United Nations peacekeeping banner.

The troops, "Malbatt", serving in the United Nations Protection Force (Unprofor), who were honoured by Prime Minister Datuk ~~Seri Dr Mahathir~~ Mohamad today, are ready for their mission to protect the Bosnians from Serb aggression and acts of atrocities.

The 3rd Royal Armour Camp here, where the Malaysian team is being trained, is filled with gaiety and high spirits.

Even 19-year-old Mohamed Izzani Salleh, the youngest among the 1,489 Malaysian troopers, showed no sign of anxiety.

"As long as I'm wearing this uniform, I'm prepared to face any challenges," he said. -- more

AZG JK

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Troops-Bosnia 2 Sungai Petani

"We're ready," Malbatt commander Kol Mohamed Hashim Hussein told a group of visitors specially flown from Kuala Lumpur for the event.

Hashim, on whom Dr Mahathir fitted the blue UN beret at the parade to mark their new duty with the UN, said his charges had shown full commitment in their training.

Malaysia's mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina was to ensure peace, he said, adding: "We are not there to fight but to keep the peace. As the word "peacekeeping" suggests, we are there to be friends to everybody,"

Addressing the parade, Dr Mahathir said he was proud of the Malbatt team and that its mission was an "honourable" one.

However, he reminded them that it was a heavy and dangerous responsibility. -- more

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Troops-Bosnia 3 (last) Sungai Petani

The prime minister said a major problem for them would be the freezing temperature.

However, he was confident that the team would perform their duties admirably and keep Malaysia's image high.

Major Abdul Rahman Ahmad, who will be attached to the Unprofor Civil Affairs division, said the temperature in the Balkan republic could go as low as minus 20 degrees Celsius during winter, which starts around mid-November.

The first batch of the main contingent of 183 members will leave for Zagreb on Sept 30 and the last batch by early December.

An advance liaison team of 21 members left on Sept 21. -- Bernama

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