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Mahathir-Bosnia

REFERENDUM MUST COVER ALL BOSNIANS, SAYS PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 4 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the proposal for a referendum to endorse the self-declared Bosnian Serb assembly's decision to reject an international peace plan to settle the conflict in Bosnia-herzegovina should cover all Bosnians, including the Muslims. (P)

The prime minister said: "The people who have to leave Bosnia-Herzegovina must also have their say (in the referendum).

Speaking to reporters after launching the national-level Occupational Safety and Health Campaign, here, he said more than two million (mostly Muslims) had had to flee the country including to Malaysia.

"These people must be given the right to participate in the referendum," he added.

He was commenting on a statement by Serbian leader Radovan Karadzic that a referendum would be held on Aug 27 and 28 to endorse the assembly's decision to reject the peace plan drawn up by the Contact Group of the United Nations, United States, Russia and the European Union. -- more

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Dr Mahathir was, however, against a referendum being held "because we know the true situation where more Bosnians (Muslims) have been killed than Serbs."

"With the Bosnians gone...what for hold a memorandum," he said.

He also said that if the United Nations was unable to act against the Serbs, how was it going to take action against war criminals in the International Court.

He felt that that the move by certain parties to bring the Serbs to justice was an eye wash.

Reiterating he had lost confidence in the UN, he said the world body had taken immediate action to resolve the situation in West Asia and several other countries but failed to settle the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovia. -- more

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Dr Mahathir also criticised the UN for allowing the problem in Rwanda to deteriorate until thousands of people had died from the war, food shortage and diseases.

"Only when 500,000 people have died are they sending supplies and so forth... what use are the supplies to the dead," he said.

To a question, he said Malaysia's capacity to help the Rwandans was limited. (The Malaysian government had donated US\$100,000 (RM250,000) to help them).

He added that Malaysia had done its best to help other countries like sending its troops to serve under the UN in several countries facing problems. -- Bernama