

PM: Malaysia must not be used

Chakrapong

By Farush Khan and
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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that former Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister Prince Norodom Chakrapong should leave as soon as possible as he did not want Malaysia to be used as a base for revolutions.

The Prime Minister said the Malaysian Government's decision that Chakrapong leave (before his half-brother Cambodian First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh's visit here in the middle of this month) was final.

"We are prepared to give asylum to people on condition they do not use Malaysia as a base to act against their countries.

"We are not a place to be used as a base for any revolution," he told reporters after launching this year's National Occupational Safety and Health Campaign here.

Chakrapong, 49, a son of King Norodom Sihanouk, arrived here on July 3 following an abortive coup in Phnom Penh.

Asked whether Chakrapong had used Malaysia as a base for revolution, he said: "As far as I know, he was involved in an attempt to topple the Cambodian Government. By right, when given asylum, (he) should not use Malaysia as a place to seek protection..."

The Cabinet decided on July 13 that Chakrapong should leave. France was later said to have offered to take him.

Asked whether Chakrapong had agreed to go to France, Dr Mahathir said he did not know.

"But his children can stay here as they did not commit any offence," he said.

Chakrapong has six children living and studying here.

In the abortive coup, it was reported that between 200 and 300 rebels, in a convoy of five trucks and 12 armoured personnel carriers, converged on the capital on the night of July 2 but they were met 25km from Phnom Penh by government troops in tanks who had advance warning.

The coup force gave up without any fight and later returned to their units.

King Sihanouk's Cabinet requested that Chakrapong not be detained and he was escorted to a Malaysia-bound flight after the Cambodian Government agreed to a request from King Sihanouk to let the prince go.

After the 1978 Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, Chakrapong had joined the royalist Funcinpec which, with the Khmer Rouge, fought the Phnom Penh regime in a civil war that ended in 1991.

Made a four-star general, Chakrapong was reported to have commanded a 1,500-man brigade in Ranariddh's army. However, after the Paris accord was signed, the two brothers split and Chakrapong switched support to Hun Sen, his decade-old enemy and was made a Deputy Prime Minister.

Trouble began for Chakrapong when Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party lost in the elections to Funcinpec.

On the proposed referendum to endorse the Serb Assembly's decision to reject a peace plan to end the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Dr Mahathir said it must cover the Bosnian Muslims too.

The Prime Minister said

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as a base for revolution. must leave

Nation's regret over UN's action in Rwanda

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over two million Bosnians (mostly Muslims) had fled Bosnia-Herzegovina (since the war started almost three years ago) for other countries, including Malaysia.

"These people must be also given the right to take part in the referendum."

He was asked on a statement by Serbian leader Radovan Karadzic that a referendum would be held on Aug 27 and 28 for the purpose. The peace plan was drawn up by the Contact Group of the United Na-

tions, United States, Russia and the European Union.

The Prime Minister said he was not in favour of the proposed referendum "as we know the actual situation where more Bosnians were killed compared to Serbs".

"The Bosnians are gone ... what is the purpose of holding a referendum?" he asked, adding that those remaining in Bosnia now were the Serbs who had killed more than 300,000 Bosnians.

Dr Mahathir also expressed doubts about the

United Nations' ability to act against war criminals in the International Court since it had failed to act against the Serbs.

"I think this trial of war criminals ... and all these are just an eye wash."

He said Malaysia (and other countries) had sent their representatives to help find a solution to the conflict but there had been no indication that the UN could act effectively against the Serbs.

Dr Mahathir also reiterated Malaysia's regret over

the UN action in allowing the problem in Rwanda to deteriorate until thousands of people died from the war, diseases and famine.

He said the UN decided to send food and other supplies only after 500,000 people had died.

Asked to elaborate on Malaysia's assistance to Rwanda, he said Malaysia's capacity was limited.

He said Malaysia (which donated RM250,000 for the people of Rwanda) had done its best to help people of other countries.