

Malaysia will continue its support, visit Immediate aid for

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and
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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Malaysia has agreed to provide immediate humanitarian assistance in the form of medical aid, including medicine, which the Bosnian Government has urgently requested following the worsening situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad agreed to immediately despatch the medical assistance following a request by Bosnian Prime Minister Dr Haris Silajdzic today.

Silajdzic submitted a list of the medical supplies, including dressings, intravenous solutions and analgesics, which his country urgently required when he called on Dr Mahathir at the Home Ministry today.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, assured Silajdzic that Malaysia would not withdraw its troops serving with the United Nations Protection Force (Unprofor) although the Malaysian Government had stated that its military observers, assigned to the United Nations Military Observer Group, would be withdrawn.

Malaysia has 1,533 peacekeepers based in Konjic, Visoko, Pazaric and Jablanica in Bosnia and Split in Croatia, as well as 27 military observers in Bosnia.

Silajdzic was accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Tan Sri Ahmad Kamil Jaafar and Bosnia-Herzegovina charge d'affaires in Malaysia Ibrahim Bukvic when he called on Dr Mahathir.

The Bosnian Prime Minister arrived here yesterday on a two-day working visit to brief Dr Mahathir on the latest position in Bosnia and to get diplomatic support for Bosnia. He left for Brunei this afternoon.

Abdullah, who briefed reporters on the hour-long discussion between the two leaders, said the Bosnian request for medical assistance would be immediately looked into.

"What the Bosnians need immediately are medicine and medical aid. We have

given an assurance that we will provide them with help in whatever way we can.

"We are prepared to provide as much humanitarian aid as we can," Abdullah said.

Abdullah said Silajdzic informed Dr Mahathir of the situation in Bosnia which, he said, appeared to be worsening and the Bosnian Prime Minister had requested co-operation and assistance from all friendly countries.

Dr Mahathir also reiterated the Malaysian Government's firm stand on providing continuing support to help the Bosnian people's struggle.

"We will take whatever measures necessary to assist them and give them whatever assistance they require," Abdullah said.

He said Malaysians had always been generous whenever there had been a call for additional assistance or aid to Bosnia.

Abdullah said Dr Mahathir and Silajdzic also agreed that economic co-operation between the two countries be stepped up despite the many hardships and challenges currently faced by Bosnia.

He said Dr Mahathir had during his visit to Zagreb last December called for three-way economic co-operation between Bosnia, Croatia and Malaysia and urged that this be continued.

Silajdzic gave Dr Mahathir an assurance that the Bosnian Government would do whatever it could on the matter.

Abdullah added, however, that at this stage nothing much could be achieved in this respect due to increasing pressures and problems faced by Bosnia and Croatia as a result of Serbian aggression.

He said even though it was difficult for Malaysian businessmen to go to Bosnia either to carry out trade or to tap investment opportunities, there were opportunities available for Bosnians to set up trading agencies, consultancy companies and to take part in the many construction projects here.

"By doing so they can as-

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Bosnia

Bosnian army 'doing better than at any time before'

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sist in any preparation for economic reconstruction later on when the war has ended and peace comes to Bosnia."

Asked whether the Bosnians were holding their own considering the worsening situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Abdullah said the Bosnian army had been able to withstand Serbian aggression for more than two years now.

"Nobody believed they could do it but they are doing it and there are signs and evidence that the Bosnian Government army is doing better than at any time before."

Asked when the Malaysian military observers would be withdrawn from Bosnia, Abdullah said some procedures would have to be taken.

"We may have to officially inform the authorities concerned in Bosnia and New York about our intentions (to withdraw observers). Administrative follow-up action will have to be taken up immediately."

Malaysia has channelled aid in various forms to the Bosnians.

The Bosnian Action Front (BBF) collected RM2.9 million for the war-torn country. It was aimed at rallying Malaysians to contribute and help alleviate the plight of the Bosnians.

Of the RM2.04 million collected through the Bosnian Relief Fund, set up by the National Welfare Foundation under the Ministry of National Unity and Social Development, about RM500,000 was allocated for medical aid to the Bosnians. Another RM300,000 from the fund was also used to send additional medical supplies to the war-ravaged country.

Part of the proceeds was also used to help the 215 Bosnian families in Malaysia.

Malaysia also sent 10,000 boxes of Hari Raya cakes to Muslims in Bosnia as a symbol of understanding and sympathy for their struggle in February this year. The cakes and goodies were bought from the proceeds of the Bosnian Relief Fund.

The Malaysian Students' Law Society in the United Kingdom and Eire launched a Children of the World Appeal in January this year with the aim of collecting RM4 million for children in Bosnia-Herzegovina.