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ALL VIETNAMESE BOAT PEOPLE WILL BE REPATRIATED BY JUNE 30

HANOI, March 7 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is confident that all the Vietnamese boat people remaining in the country would be repatriated by June 30, this year, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Many of them had registered with authorities to return home under the Voluntary Repatriation Programme, he added.

He was convinced that the rest would follow once they saw their compatriots going home, he told reporters after a meeting with his Vietnamese counterpart Vo Van Kiet at the Government Guest House, here.

Dr Mahathir said Hanoi had agreed to take back all its people in Malaysia and they would be transported home in batches by ship.

There are about 4,000 Vietnamese boat people left in the Sungei Besi transit camp outside Kuala Lumpur.

A total of 252,461 Vietnamese boat people arrived in Malaysia between the height of the exodus at the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 and 1993. --

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