

22 JAN 1996

CENPEACE CONDEMNS BOAT PEOPLE FOR RESORTING TO VIOLENCE

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 22 (Bernama) -- The Centre For Peace Initiatives (Cenpeace) today condemned the resort to violence by some of the boat people at the Sungai Besi transit camp last Thursday.

Cenpeace executive director Fan Yew Teng described the act as unjustified and disgraceful behavior. During the incident, some Vietnamese boat people burnt down two living quarters after a clash with police which left 24 people, including seven policemen, injured.

"We cannot sympathise with boat people who refuse to give themselves a chance to live under new economic conditions in Vietnam," Fan said in a press statement.

He said it was not Malaysia's fault if third countries now decided that it did not want to take the remaining boat people still at the camp.

Malaysia, he said, had done its part to help the Vietnamese boat people over the past 20 years, during which time they have been given shelter and help while they tried to gain access to third countries.

"We fully support Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's stand that the government will remain firm about repatriating Vietnamese people from the camp," Fan said. -- Bernama