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Hamid-Bosnia

MALAYSIA FULLY COMMITTED TOWARDS BOSNIA, SAYS SYED HAMID

By: E. Sivabalan

SARAJEVO, April 10 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has again reaffirmed its commitment to help in the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by offering commercial, economic and technical cooperation to the war-ravaged state.

Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar said today Malaysia will encourage its investors to tap the potentials in Bosnia to ensure that it prospered and was able to maintain the peace achieved through the Dayton Peace Accord.

"The government will encourage the private sector to reconstruct Bosnia, and the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will start the ball rolling by bringing along several businessmen during his visit here next week," he told Bernama here.

TSyed Hamid is here to attend the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting to discuss a common stand on rebuilding Bosnia.

Countries attending the two-day foreign and defence ministers meeting were Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Egypt, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, Kuwait, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Turkey and United Arab Emirates.

Syed Hamid said he conveyed Malaysia's commitment to his Bosnian counterpart Vladimir Zoljic and Bosnian Foreign Minister Dr Jadranko Prlic during talks with them at this Bosnian capital yesterday.

He was informed that the Bosnian government was in dire need of financial assistance to rebuild the country.

They expressed concern over several financial pledges which have yet to be received, he said.

He added: "I think they are concerned that while there has been a lot of statements of intention on the part of the West - the US and Europe - money for the reconstruction has still not filtered through.

"So, to them, the peace process is fragile and it is important that reconstruction commence immediately."

Syed Hamid also lashed out at the Western media for making unfounded allegations that the OIC had done nothing physically to help the Bosnians.

He said: "A lot of the work undertaken by the OIC countries are not seen publicly... if you talk of OIC in totality, many are in the developing country category.

"The fact that the OIC member countries have assisted to bring peace, and with many OIC countries taking part in the peace process, I think it will be wrong to project it as the OIC against the west."

Syed Hamid said the OIC meeting here was clear proof of the member countries' commitment to rebuild Bosnia-Herzegovina and to ensure its success and continued existence in the (Bosnian-Croat) Federation.

"The idea (for the meeting) is a strong message that we are not paying lip service," he said, adding that Malaysia had helped Bosnia multilaterally through the OIC and, bilaterally, "and we will continue to do so."

"As such, it is important that we correct this wrong perception... the OIC countries have multilaterally given moral support and bilaterally contributed to the achievement of peace," he said.

Later, Syed Hamid left for Livno, about 200 km from here to visit the Malaysian Contingent (Malcon I) troops. -- BERNAMA

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