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MTUC

MTUC SUPPORTS PM'S CALL TO REDUCE DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN WORKERS

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 19 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) today supported Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call for employers to reduce their dependence on foreign workers, saying that it has been asking the government to ban migrant labour for almost 10 years.

MTUC president Zainal Rampak said the prime minister's call was timely as there were now more than 3 million foreign workers, both legal and illegal in the country.

"In fact, the MTUC has been continually calling upon the government to ban migrant labour for almost 10 years now, and we are pleased that things are beginning to fall in place, though somewhat late," he said in a statement here.

"Foreign workers constitute almost 15 per cent of the country's population of 20 million, and if their ever increasing numbers are not checked right now, it may bring about serious social, economic and political implications in the future and it may be too late then," Zainal said.

He said locals are also being discriminated against by employers who employ migrant workers sometimes at a higher wage.

"For instance, local and foreign workers in KL Glass Sdn Bhd, were paid RM375 and RM550 respectively every month, with foreign workers enjoying all benefits pursuant to the Collective Agreement," said Zainal.

He said such double standards practised by employers had kept interested locals away from unskilled and semi-skilled jobs.

Developed countries like Japan did not experience such a problem because the locals were paid fair wages and accorded benefits consistent with the cost of living, he said.

In Malaysia, he said, companies employed migrant workers to take undue advantage of the cheaper labour and boost their profit margins.

However, although the MTUC objected to the presence of migrant labour, but it would not remain silent if they were being exploited by ruthless employers and denied their basic rights, he added. -- BERNAMA

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