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Mahathir-Kosovo

MALAYSIA WANTS NATO TO SEND GROUND FORCES TO PROTECT ALBANIANS

KUALA LUMPUR, April 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged Nato to despatch its ground forces to Kosovo to protect the remaining ethnic Albanians from Serb atrocities.

"We are dealing with a man (Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic) totally brutal who is prepared to kill and...massacre," he said in a brief interview with Bernama dan RTM at the National Heart Institute (IJN) shortly before he was discharged after undergoing an 11-day treatment for lung infection.

In his first reaction to the Nato air strikes on Belgrade, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia fully supported the Nato military actions until Milosevic complies with demands that he halt military action in Kosovo.

"I was in Mecca when this happened," he said.

He urged Nato to intensify its efforts to bring an end to the Serbian atrocities in Kosovo.

The prime minister made this call as foreign ministers from Nato countries converged in Brussels today in a show of unity against President Milosevic as alliance air strikes continued for a 20th day.

Agency reports say the 19 ministers went into an all-day session to plot out their military, political and humanitarian course of action over the Kosovo crisis.

Describing the atrocities by Milosevic similar to those by Hitler during the World War II, Dr Mahathir said Nato should move in its ground forces to Kosovo to protect the remaining ethnic Albanians from Serbs forces.

Reports from Brussels said that Nato ministers would consider the "timing and conditions" of the deployment of a Nato ground force in Kosovo to help refugees return home but that an invasion of the province was not being contemplated at the present time.

Nato estimates 960,000 ethnic Albanians have been expelled from Kosovo or displaced by the conflict in the past year.

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