

25 AUG 1999

Mahathir-Acheh

MALAYSIA DOES NOT SUPPORT ACHEHNESE REFUGEES, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 25 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Malaysia does not support any effort by Acehese refugees here for the cessation of Aceh from the Indonesian republic.

He said that the Acehese refugees here were not allowed the freedom to do anything that could jeopardise Indonesia.

"We do have Acehese refugees here, but we do not allow them any freedom to do anything to jeopardise Indonesia and we do not provide them any support," he told reporters after a meeting with President B.J Habibie at the Prime Minister's office, here.

Dr Mahathir was asked by an Indonesian journalist whether there were Acehese refugees here.

Habibie arrived earlier today for a one-day working visit to reciprocate that by Dr Mahathir to Indonesia's Batam Island last May.

Habibie's entourage includes Foreign Minister Ali Alatas, Coordinating Minister for Economy, Finance and Industry Ginandjar Kartasasmita, Defence Minister and Armed Forces Chief Gen Tan Sri Wiranto, Industry and Trade Minister Rahardi Ramelan and Justice Minister Muladi.

The two-hour bilateral meeting was attended by eight members from the Indonesian delegation and 12 from the Malaysian delegation.

The prime minister also said that Malaysia was not in support of any effort for cessation of any countries because Malaysia could face the same possibility.

"If we were to render help to other parties to break away from a neighbouring country, we may face the same problem," he said.

Habibie was also asked whether he was concerned about reports saying that arms are going through Malaysia to Aceh.

The Indonesian president said he was not concerned as everthing was under control.

"No. This is all under control and we are doing our job," he said.

Habibie was also asked about the six CN235 transport aircraft for the Royal Malaysian Air Force.

He said three of the aircraft would be delivered tomorrow while another threer expected to be delivered in October.

He said the agreement for the purchase was reached a long time ago.

Malaysia signed the agreement in February 1995 to buy the aircraft from the Industri Pesawat Terbang Nusantara (IPTN).

-- BERNAMA

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