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Youth groups to give memorandum to UN

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Umno and MCA Youth will submit a joint memorandum to the United Nations, calling for Asean to play the leading role in peacekeeping operation in East Timor.

The decision was reached at a meeting between the international bureaus of the two movements at Umno headquarters in Menara Dato' Onn.

Umno Youth international bureau chief Abdul Azim Mohd Zabidi and his counterpart from MCA Fam Lee Ee said the memorandum would be submitted in the next two or three days to the office of the world body at Wisma UN here.

Besides the decision on the peacekeeping force, Fam said the meeting had also agreed on two matters concerning the former Portugese colony - to respect the outcome of the referendum where the majority of East Timorese had opted for independence; and restoration of peace and order by the UN peacekeeping force.

The movements' stand on the peacekeeping operation echoed those of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who had expressed his views last week that Asean should take the lead instead of Australia.

Dr Mahathir said that Australia should scale down the size of its forces and be less belligerent in the way it was going about securing peace and disarming the militias in East Timor.

Abdul Azim said it was regrettable that some Asean countries had not been firm in expressing their views on Australia's dominance in the peacekeeping operation.

"So far, only Malaysia has expressed its stand while the others are keeping quiet," Abdul Azim said.

On Australia's role in the peacekeeping operation, Fam said they regretted the heavy-handed approach adopted by the country and its sincerity in wanting to help East Timor.

On claims by Pas that Malaysia intended to seek diplomatic ties with Israel following the meeting between Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and his counterpart David Levy in New York recently, Abdul Azim said the party was only good at spreading lies.

"The two leaders did meet but this does not mean that Malaysia wants to establish diplomatic relations," he said.

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