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Malaysia-Indonesia

KL, JAKARTA STEP UP ANTI-TERRORISM AND ANTI-EXTREMISM COLLABORATION

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 27 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Indonesia today agreed to step up cooperation in combating terrorism and extremist activities, the Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said.

He said that at their talks here the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and visiting Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri concurred that Malaysian and Indonesian security agencies should exchange intelligence and take preventive measures to check regional terrorism.

Briefing reporters after the hour-long talks, Syed Hamid said Dr Mahathir and Megawati discussed the tendency of terrorist or extremist groups to have cross-border linkages.

Megawati arrived today for a two-day visit to Malaysia as the last leg of her familiarisation tour of nine Asean member countries.

Syed Hamid said both leaders stressed the importance of close Malaysia-Indonesia cooperation in the interest of their national security to avoid consequences that could jeopardise both countries as well as the region.

Syed Hamid said the prime minister briefed the president on the existence of the so-called KMM militant group since Indonesia too would require such intelligence report.

"At times a particular group would make use of Malaysia and this (KMM) group is also made up of Indonesians and people of other nationalities," said Syed Hamid who attended the talks with his Indonesian counterpart Noer Hassan Wirajuda.

Early this month Malaysian police detained 10 people under the Internal Security Act for alleged involvement in KMM activities prejudicial to national security.

A Malaysian Taufik Abdul Halim, 26, detained in Indonesia in connection with separate bomb blasts at two Jakarta churches and a shopping complex, had reportedly confessed to being a KMM member and having operated in the Philippines besides Malaysia and Indonesia.

Syed Hamid said both Dr Mahathir and Megawati expressed concern over terrorist and extremist activities especially those relating to Muslim elements in southern Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Both leaders were convinced that cooperation and exchange of intelligence information between Malaysian and Indonesian security agencies would be a boon to preventive efforts against terrorism and extremism.

"Malaysia has occasionally been used to smuggle people, narcotics and now weapons. We are always on the watchout and we take very firm and strong measures against this group," said Syed Hamid.

Megawati also thanked Dr Mahathir and the Malaysian government for being firmly against supporting the Aceh separatist movement bent on seeking autonomy and breaking away from Indonesia, Syed Hamid said.

Dr Mahathir and Megawati also discussed Indonesian immigrant workers in Malaysia, the common land border, air space and economic cooperation.

On Indonesian workers, Syed Hamid said Malaysia insisted on them entering the country lawfully and through legal channels for their own protection against exploiters.

"The president agreed that the matter be approached properly and comprehensively given that many Indonesians are keen in working in this country," said Syed Hamid.

Megawati also expressed desire to see greater utilisation of the

Malaysia-Indonesia Joint Commission meeting to serve as a more effective mechanism to resolve problems affecting both countries.

Both leaders agreed on having annual exchange visit by the Malaysian prime minister and the Indonesian president as well as by ministers and officials.

Megawati also extended invitation to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and Dr Mahathir to visit Indonesia.

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