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Mahathir-Bosnia

M'SIA WILL CONTINUE TO HELP UN AS LONG AS IT IS ABLE TO, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 28 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will continue to help the United Nations (UN) in any peace-keeping mission as long as conditions in the country permit it, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said Malaysia was willing to help now because it was able to in terms of finance and capability.

"And we will continue (to help) if required by the UN," he said when launching the book "Malbatt dan Malcon di Bosnia Herzegovina: Imbasan Kembali" at the Defence Ministry Auditorium here.

He said that although there was a lot of killing and oppression going on in the world now not many countries were able to help.

Some countries might be rich but were unable to help because they lacked the skills, he said.

The 171-page book published by the army headquarters recounts the experiences of the officers of the Malaysia Battalion (Malbatt) and the Malaysia Contingent (Malcon) in the UN peace-keeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Dr Mahathir said that to participate in peace missions Malaysia must strengthen its economy so that it became a developed nation.

He said Malaysian troops had participated in UN peace-keeping missions for a long time.

They started in Congo and were later present in Cambodia, Somalia and finally Bosnia where they were accepted by the local population because of their professionalism, efficiency and high discipline, he added.

He said that when Muslims in Bosnia were victimised and massacred, many big nations held meetings for weeks but in the end did nothing to stop the oppression.

But Malaysia immediately responded to the UN's request for troops to help the oppressed, irrespective of race or religion, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that when the UN stopped payments to the peace-keepers, many countries had to withdraw their troops.

"But for Malaysia, we did not withdraw our troops because we had the allocations and the capability to handle it," he said.

He said that about 200,000 people, including civilians, mostly Muslims were killed and victimised in Bosnia but not many countries offered assistance.

The prime minister said he was proud that up to now Malaysia's military missions overseas had discharged their duties well and had never tarnished the country's good name.

He also welcomed the services of the military saying: "If there are no troops, the country will not be peaceful and there'll be no development."

-- BERNAMA

HT HT JK