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Karpal-Singapore

KARPAL TELLS GOVT TO BE FIRM IN DISPUTE OVER PULAU BATU PUTEH

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 24 (Bernama) -- The government should be firm in upholding Malaysia's territorial sovereignty and not allow Singapore to subdue it by show of might in their dispute over Pulau Batu Puteh, prominent lawyer and DAP national deputy chairman Karpal Singh said today.

He said that the Singapore government should be mature and not try to distract its citizens from the economic woes the republic was facing by practically claiming the ownership of the island, even before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague had determined the dispute.

"I fully agree with the statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Singapore has gone beyond accepted norms by carrying out construction and development work on Pulau Batu Puteh when ownership of the island is in dispute," he said in a statement here.

Dr Mahathir's remarks over reports of physical development and construction activities on the rocky outcrop, located off 15 nautical miles off Pengerang, Johor, by Singapore were carried by newspapers today.

Karpal Singh said that Singapore had no business to rapidly increase its physical presence on the island by constructing new buildings and a helipad after both countries had agreed to take the dispute to the ICJ following a meeting between Dr Mahathir and his counterpart, Goh Chok Tong, in September last year.

Singapore, he said, should realise that in the event that the ICJ decides in favour of Malaysia, all immovable fixtures on the island would, in law, belong to Malaysia.

"The Malaysian government should forthwith file the necessary claim with the ICJ and procure an interim order that the status quo be preserved pending settlement of the dispute and in the meanwhile Singapore be compelled to dismantle all structures built by it on the island," he added.

The ICJ recently decided that Malaysia, and not Indonesia, is the rightful owner of the Ligitan and Sipadan islands off Sabah.

-- BERNAMA

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