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Syed Hamid-Amien

LOOK AT WHIPPING LAW RATIONALLY, SYED HAMID TELLS AMIEN

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 20 (Bernama) -- The People's Consultative Council Speaker of Indonesia, Amien Rais, should look rationally at Malaysia's law that allows whipping for illegal foreign workers, Foreign Minister, Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, said today.

"Let us avoid emotions. Talk with rationality, responsibility and accountability," he told a press conference after meeting visiting Ukraine's First Vice-Prime Minister Oleg Dubyna.

"I'm sure as a leader, member of the legislature and speaker of the national assembly, he would not have encouraged his citizens to come to another country, which is a sovereign and independent state, illegally," he said when asked to comment about Amien's recent outbursts on the whipping punishment enforced by Malaysia on illegal immigrants.

"Is he saying it's alright for Indonesians to come here illegally," he said.

Amien had described the mandatory whipping as "inhumane" and an "insult" to Indonesians.

Syed Hamid said he thought as a leader, Amien would give a positive statement on the matter, and would advise Indonesians wanting to come to Malaysia to go through proper channel and processes.

He said whipping was meant to be a deterrent and make people think twice about coming to this country illegally.

He said every action Malaysia took against Indonesian illegal migrant workers was after consultations with the Indonesian Government through its embassy here.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had explained the amended immigration law to Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri during his recent visit to the republic.

He said without permanent employment, those entering Malaysia illegally could destabilise the country, and without jobs, they also could end up doing undesirable activities or exploited by their employers.

He said Malaysia would be blamed if illegal foreign workers were exploited.

"When we need them, when there are jobs and employment, our country is open, but go through the normal process," he said.

He said Malaysia had established a mechanism to recruit foreign workers.

He said Malaysia had taken humane and compassionate action against illegal foreign workers previously, including legalising them, and giving them one year grace period until July 31 to leave the country.

He also pointed out that Malaysia had sent back over 400,000 illegal foreign workers at its own cost.

-- BERNAMA

MSL AZH TS