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Myanmar-Razali

MYANMAR'S "VERY NOTABLE" STEP TOWARDS DEMOCRACY, SAYS RAZALI

KUALA LUMPUR, May 6 (Bernama) -- The United Nations Special Envoy to Myanmar Tan Sri Razali Ismail is "delighted" with the release of Myanmar's opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, from house arrest yesterday.

He said that her release was a very important step towards democracy and a constitutional government.

He outlined further steps during the confidence-building process and called on Asean to play a bigger role.

Razali congratulated the government of Myanmar for the release of Suu Kyi yesterday after 19 months of house arrest.

He said that he was sure the oppositionist would be able to accomplish her role as leader of the National League for Democracy and work with the government to move the process along to eventual democracy and a constitutional government.

"It's not a question of concessions," he told reporters who met him at the Suria KLCC today.

"It is what is her due, what is her right as a political leader. This should be recognised.

"But you should also recognise the clear commitment of the government of Myanmar towards taking the step to move from military government towards civilian constitutional government.

"It's taken them some time to deal with it and now they're dealing with it and we should support them," he said.

Razali, Malaysia's former Permanent Representative to the United Nations, was appointed by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to resolve the deadlock between the State Peace and Development Council and the National League for Democracy.

He said that he did not think Suu Kyi was under any restrictions from the military junta and that she could travel -- but that the national reconciliation process required all parties to be "responsible".

As national reconciliation and confidence-building continues, he said, more political prisoners would be released from jail and could take part in Myanmar's political process.

With good will and clear intentions on everyone's part, Razali said, elections could be held in Myanmar within two to three years.

The envoy said Asean should play a bigger role in Myanmar's national reconciliation process -- and not leave it to Malaysia or Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

-- BERNAMA

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