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Syed Hamid-Myanmar

NOT RIGHT TIME TO MEET AUNG SAN SUU KYI, SAYS SYED HAMID

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 20 (Bernama) -- A meeting between Malaysian officials and Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi did not materialise during Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's two-day working visit to Myanmar because it is not the right time.

"One of our hopes when we visited Myanmar is to meet Suu Kyi, if possible, to feel the reconciliation process as it developed and evolved because Malaysia has been involved and Dr Mahathir is a strong friend of Myanmar," Foreign Minister, Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, said.

"I think the present environment does not enable us to see her because the Myanmar side may not feel it is right when we make an official visit on their invitation, we want to see Suu Kyi," he told a press conference after meeting visiting Ukraine's First Vice-Prime Minister, Oleg Dubyna, at his office.

"I would love to see her but we understand whatever we do, as normally practised in Malaysia, we would not like it to be interpreted as trying to interfere in the domestic political affairs of a country.

"At the right time, I would like to visit and see Suu Kyi," he said.

Asked about his scheduled breakfast meeting with Suu Kyi that did not take place, Syed Hamid said there was no cancellation although arrangements were made for a meeting with the Myanmar opposition leader during the visit.

"We are always sensitive to domestic situations. We made preparations. If it is possible, we would like to see. But when they want it just Myanmar-Malaysia, then definitely we cannot push the idea of wanting to see her," he said.

He said whatever meeting Malaysian officials wanted to have with Suu Kyi, the Malaysian side had indicated that it wanted to know what the Myanmar Government thought of it, whether it was right or not right.

"If they feel it is not right, then, we will not go ahead with whatever we wanted to do," he said, adding that Malaysia did not want to jeopardise the political process in Myanmar and the official visit.

He said Malaysia understood the position of the Myanmar Government.

"They are trying to get the process to be made in the way they feel they can move into the next step because they got other problems within the country, such as political situation, the multi-ethnic population and harmonising the economy," he said.

He said the fact that the Myanmar Government released Suu Kyi was a good step forward but they know they have to make other steps and the international community was following the matter very closely.

As far as Asean was concerned, he said, the 10-member regional grouping had taken the stand that there should not be any interference in the domestic political affairs of another country.

At the same time, Asean encouraged Myanmar to go into the mainstream of international community by moving to the political and democratic process, he said.

"They (Myanmar Government) promised they will do that (moving to mainstream of international community), but how they should go about, we should leave it to their wisdom," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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