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Razali not going to give up on Myanmar

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SEPANG, Sat. - Disappointed but not discouraged, this is what United Nations Special Envoy Tan Sri Razali Ismail feels about his ninth mission to assist the national reconciliation process in Myanmar.

While expressing disappointment that there have been no high-level discussions between the National League for Democracy and the ruling junta leaders, Razali said he would not quit, as his job was "not quite done".

Razali said he intended to return to Myanmar not earlier than the end of January to assess developments.

He said considered quitting, but for the time being would not.

"I am always disappointed when there are no results but that is the nature of my mission.

"I can't expect good results all the time," he said at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport after a five-day trip to Yangon.

Razali who is Malaysia's former Permanent Representative to the United Nations and the president of the 51st session of the UN General Assembly, described his mission to Yangon as important.

"There were several discussions on a lower level which were not tantamount to a dialogue between the NLD and the junta," he said.

"The trip has been important. I now understand how complicated the issues are.

"However, the UN will keep insisting that the process of reconciliation must continue."

Razali said he would report to the UN secretary-general Kofi Annan and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on his mission.

He added that he continued to believe that dialogue on substantive issues was essential if a lasting and durable national reconciliation in Myanmar was to be achieved.

He told the Government and the NLD that higherlevel discussions should be held to maximise and develop the existing channels of discussion in order to achieve an amicable solution.

Razali also urged Yangon to take steps to reconvene the National Convention in a manner acceptable to all parties committed to the national reconciliation process, and also reiterated his call for the Government to release some 200 political prisoners by year-end.

"I have made several suggestions to reconvening the National Convention and it is being taken into account," Razali said, adding that he hoped the Government would decide soon.

During his stay in Yangon, Razali met the Prime Minister of Myanmar and the Chairman of the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Senior General Than Shwe, SPDC secretary (1) General Khin Nyunt and other Government leaders.

Separately, he met the General Secretary of the NLD, Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD Central Executive Committee and representatives of the Committee Representing the People's Parliament (CRPP), the United Nationalities Alliance and the National Unity Party (NUP).

Razali brokered talks between Suu Kyi and the military junta in October 2000 which later resulted in Suu Kyi's release from house arrest.