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Crimea-Gratitude

CRIMEA AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC EXPRESSES GRATITUDE TO MALAYSIA

By: Mohd Kamel Othman

SIMFEROPOL (Ukraine), July 16 (Bernama) -- The Crimea Autonomous Republic has expressed gratitude to the Malaysian government for contributing US\$10,000 (RM38,000) towards the reconstruction of the 450-year-old mosque in the city of Evpatoria, here.

"The people of Crimea would like to thank Malaysia for the contribution as it is so meaningful to us," its Prime Minister, Sergiy Kunizyu said Tuesday.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad handed over the contribution on behalf of the Malaysian government to Kunizyu at a brief ceremony at the Simferopol International Airport.

Dr Mahathir, on a four-day official visit to Ukraine, had earlier visited Odessa, a port city south of Ukrainian capital Kiev.

At Odessa, Dr Mahathir toured the Odessa Port and witnessed the signing of joint venture agreements between JM Ventures Sdn Bhd and Odessa Port Transshipment Complex LLC and technical collaboration agreements between state-owned UKRSEXPOR and Yasmin Marine Technology Sdn Bhd and UKRSEXPOR and AMP Corporation Sdn Bhd.

Accompanying him were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik and Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamed.

In his speech at Simferopol, Dr Mahathir hoped that the contribution would bring back in a small way the environment with which the people of Crimea had been familiar with.

Tracing back the history of the Tartars, the Prime Minister said that the tragic events where 188,626 Tatars were forcibly deported en masse from their own land and villages to Central Asia and other far away parts of Russia would always be remembered.

The entire Tatar population in Crimea became victims of Stalin's oppressive policies during the Second World War.

"I understand that the Crimea Autonomous Republic has been working hard to resettle the Tatar returnees and attend to their needs. We emphathise with the Crimean Tatars' struggle to rebuild their lives and reclaim their national and cultural rights in the face of difficult social and economic obstacles," Dr Mahathir added.

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