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Mahathir-Sovereignty

MALAYSIA DOES NOT RECOGNISE SINGAPORE CLAIMS ON PULAU BATU PUTEH

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 6 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said Malaysia does not recognise Singapore's claims of sovereignty over Pulau Batu Puteh until the matter is resolved by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague.

"As far as we are concerned, our claim (on Pulau Batu Puteh) still stands and their claim (also) still stands.

"They want to go where they claim they are entitled to, and we are entitled to go there (too)," said the Prime Minister, when asked to comment on the statement by Singapore Foreign Minister S. Jayakumar today that the republic had been in sovereignty of Pulau Batu Puteh since more than 150 years.

Malaysia and Singapore today put into motion legal procedures to end their territorial dispute over Pulau Batu Puteh by signing a special agreement to refer the matter to the ICJ in The Hague.

Earlier today, Singapore's Foreign Minister S. Jayakumar, speaking at a news conference in Putrajaya after the signing of the Special Agreement to refer the dispute to the ICJ, said that Singapore would continue to exercise ownership over the island.

"Our stance now is no different from the stance that we have all these years, which is, the status quo is maintained until and unless the ICJ alters the status quo," he said.

Jayakumar said that the status quo meant that Singapore had been in ownership, control and sovereignty over Pulau Batu Puteh since more than 150 years.

In response to Jayakumar's remarks, Syed Hamid countered that Malaysia and its people had always maintained that Pulau Batu Puteh was part of the territory of the Johor Sultanate and, as such, part of Malaysia.

In a separate statement issued after the signing ceremony, he said that Malaysia's enforcement agencies and their vessels and aircraft would exercise its rights over Pulau Batu Puteh waters and airspace pending the ICJ's ruling on the territorial dispute.

-- BERNAMA

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