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Dr M: Continue giving aid

LANGKAWI, Sat. - Aid to Aceh must continue until the tsunami survivors there are able to stand on their own feet, former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said based on briefings to him by volunteers who returned from Aceh, there were still survivors in the interior parts of the province who needed direct aid.

"Food supply must not be broken until they can manage on their own," he told Bernama after welcoming a 23-man aid mission that returned home at the Kuah Jetty here today.

They had sent supplies to Aceh by ferry.

Dr Mahathir said besides food, plant seeds were also needed so that survivors could resume farming.

"Contributions from donors are much appreciated so that we can send more food supplies there."

The head of the mission, Zainal Rashid, said the team would send another 600 tonnes of food, medicines and plant seeds via ferry to Aceh soon. They had also identified two schools that need to be rebuilt.

In George Town, the Umno Tanjung division plans to provide financial aid to about 100 Aceh children orphaned by the Dec 26 tsunami.

"We are now identifying the children and how we can help them and their families to re-build their lives," said division head Datuk Ahmad Ibnihajar after 500 tonnes of aid was loaded onto navy ship KD Mahawangsa at Swettenham Pier today. It will be sent to Belawan, Indonesia.

The shipment was the largest sent from Penang.

It was also the last as some 800 tonnes of dried food, clothing and medicine had been sent to date.

(END) Source : New Straits Times