

Libyans urge M'sia to recognise the rebel gov't
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Libyans living in Malaysia has urged Prime Minister Najib Razak to recognise the Transitional National Council, the rebel government currently seeking to oust Muammar Gaddafi, the country's 42 year ruler.

Libyan Council of Malaysia representative Ahmad Nuri said recognising the TNC would be a "great gesture" on the part of Malaysia as the two countries have a very good and memorable relationship.

Nuri, whose organisation represents about 4,500 Libyans living in the country, claimed that Libya was the first to recognise Malaysia when it first gained independence in 1957.

He further said that Libyans living in the country who are mostly academics, students and members of the business community, are open to discussion with Malaysian officials to discuss about the matter.

In fact, officials from the TNC are expected to visit Malaysia in July to meet with government officials over the matter, but details are yet to be confirmed, he added.

"Other than this, it is enough for us to know that the Malaysian people feel sympathy or solidarity with us and give us their moral support for our cause, an extremely just cause for freedom, justice, and dignity without oppression," he said.

"This is what we would like Malaysians to hear from us through the media, hopefully there would be no distortion (of our message)," he added, in a forum titled "Short Summit on the Feb 17 Libyan Revolution" attended by 70 participants in Penang today.

Thousands have died

The unrest in the North African country, which began in mid-February, has already claimed thousands of lives, with Gaddafi's troops maintaining their combat capabilities despite massive NATO airstrikes against them.

France, Italy and Qatar have expressed their recognition for the TNC, while the United States is yet to recognise it although U.S. Ambassador to Libya Gene Cretz said in April that the council was "worthy of support".

Meanwhile, another Libyan, local university lecturer in Perak, AE Khaled, suggested that is Malaysia cannot officially recognise the council, they could assist by extending the visas of students who have completed their studies here.

"Students who completed their studies are told to return immediately and not allowed to extend their visa," he said.

"It is hoped that the government can help in this aspect, and allow some extension of visas," he added.

Main speaker of the event, Mathematics lecturer at the Universiti Sains Malaysia, Muatazz A Bashir, gave an in-depth presentation of the country's history and why the revolution was necessary.

"Dictator Gaddafi (right) wants to control our minds, anyone who talks against the government are either killed or kicked out of the country...there is even public hanging in public places," he said.

"We were like a volcano waiting to explode. The successful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt also encouraged us," he added.

Bashir said that contrary to media reports, the country was not facing a civil war, but civilians have

become heroes because they had to protect one another from the violent forces of Gadaffi's troops.

"Libyans are peaceful people, we respect other religions and we hate discrimination but Gaddafi uses his own media too try to incite the people and create mistrust between Libyans," he lamented.

"He said we have taken hallucination pills. But do you know what are our pills? - Twitter, Facebook, and the internet," he quipped.

The 90-minute event was chaired by Abdelnaser Omran, lecturer, USM, and other speakers included Associate Profesor Ahmad O. Bin Saleem from the International Islamic University.

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