

Myanmar embassy refuses Rohingya memo

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By Geraldine Tong

The Myanmar Embassy in Kuala Lumpur refused to open its gates to members of the Community Action for Rohingya and PAS, who went there this morning to submit their memoranda to the embassy.

They were told by a staff member of the embassy to leave their memoranda in the mailbox.

"We are not postmen," PAS-linked Geng Ustaz president Norazli Musa shouted through the embassy gate in Kuala Lumpur today.

As a sign of protest, some of the PAS members tore up copies of their memorandum in front of the embassy.

Norazli then threw the pieces of the memorandum over the embassy gates.

The memoranda urged the Myanmar government to grant full citizenship to the Rohingyas and let them go back to their homeland.

They also asked for the Myanmar government to stop the violence and persecution against the Rohingyas.

Rohingyas are a stateless Muslim minority who have been fleeing Myanmar to escape violence and persecution for years.

Just over a week ago, three boat-loads of Rohingya and Bangladeshi refugees were detained by Malaysian authorities.

Previously, boats were asked to turn back after the authorities provided them with supplies.

However, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak did an about-turn today and said the navy will conduct search-and-rescue operations to recover Rohingya boats and bring them ashore.

Shoting slogans from the kerb

Around 40 protesters from the Community Action for Rohingya coalition were headed towards the Myanmar embassy this morning but were stopped from advancing by the police.

"We just want to say 'Save the Rohingyas.' Even that too you want to stop," coalition president Mustapa Mansor told the police.

The crowd chanted slogans such as "Save the Rohingyas" and "Burma the Devil" around the corner from the embassy where they were allowed to congregate.

They were later joined by a group of around 100, many of whom are from opposition parties.

"What does it say if they do not even want to accept the memorandum?" said former PKR senator Syed Shahir Syed Mohamud.

In the list of demands in its memorandum, the Community Action for Rohingya is calling for all personnel from the Myanmar embassy to leave Malaysia.

The group is also planning to launch a campaign to boycott all products from Myanmar.

The boycott will only be called off when the Myanmar government does something to help the Rohingyas, said the coalition's representative Rozan Azen Mat Rasip.

'Oust Burma from Asean'

Malaysian Consultative Council for Islamic Organisation (Mapim) president Mohd Azmi Abdul Hamid agreed with the idea of a boycott.

He also suggested that Myanmar be ousted from ASEAN because of their crimes against the Rohingyas.

"The Myanmar embassy does not want to cooperate with or even respect Malaysian citizens," Azmi said, expressing his disappointment.

Meanwhile, PAS committee member Riduan Mohd Nor (in photo, left) rejected the Malaysian government's excuse for inaction through invoking ASEAN's declaration of zone of peace, freedom, and neutrality.

The declaration states that ASEAN members will keep Southeast Asia free from outside interference.

"This is a huge humanitarian crisis. We must intervene now," Riduan said.

Asked what would be their next step, he said PAS will try to organise another mass demonstration at the embassy.