

Najib: Malaysia to accept 3,000 Syrian refugees

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Malaysia will open its doors to 3,000 Syrian migrants over the next three years to help alleviate the refugee crisis, said Najib Abdul Razak.

The prime minister said Muslim countries were partly responsible for ensuring the well-being of the marginalised Syrians fleeing their country in massive numbers, causing social and economic stresses in Europe.

"This is why Malaysia has taken, over the years, many people fleeing war, starvation and persecution. We currently have hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants, and we took in more earlier this year when there was a dire humanitarian situation in the Andaman Sea," he said at the 70th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

It was reported that some four million Syrian refugees fled into neighbouring countries over the last four years, and slipped inexorably into poverty.

Najib said new international solutions were needed to deal with the migration crisis.

He said that "we must respect our common humanity" and the fleeing of millions of Syrians from their own country should be a world concern.

"For it is only when we transcend the silos of race and faith, only when we look at images of desperate migrants, the victims of extremists, and those whose lives are degraded by hunger and poverty - and see not strangers, but our brothers and sisters, and it is only when we see that dreadful picture of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi washed ashore - and recognise our own children in that tragic boy's innocent face - that we will act as our better selves.

"People around the world cry out for our help. We cannot - we must not - pass on by," Najib said.

Najib reiterated Malaysia's disappointment over the UN's failure to adopt the resolution to set up an international tribunal to look into the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 because a veto was imposed.

"We will continue to seek justice through other legal options, because we owe it to the families of those who perished in this outrageous crime," he said.

On July 29, Russia used its veto right to block a five-nation proposal, initiated by Malaysia, to establish an ad hoc criminal international tribunal to try those responsible for the downing of MH17 last year.

The resolution obtained 11 votes of support including from Chad, Chile, France, Jordan, Lithuania, Nigeria, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States. China, Venezuela and Angola however abstained from voting.

Flight MH17 crashed in eastern Ukraine on July 17, 2014 as it flew from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur with 283 passengers and 15 crew members on board.

The Boeing 777-200 aircraft was shot down over Donetsk near the Russian border.

- Bernama

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