

Sanctions on Iran, Qatar - M'sia, too, not safe, warns Dr M

Malaysiakini

21 December 2019

Kow Gah Chie

Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad today cautioned that Malaysia and other countries are not immune to the sanctions and embargoes imposed on Iran and Qatar.

"Such sanctions and embargoes are not going to be exclusively for Iran and Qatar.

"With the world witnessing nations making unilateral decisions to impose such punitive measures, Malaysia and other nations must always bear in mind that they can be imposed on any of us.

"That is more reason for us to be self-reliant and work with other Muslim nations towards ensuring that if and when such measures are imposed upon us, we are capable of facing it," Mahathir said during his closing remarks at the Kuala Lumpur Summit 2019 at the KL Convention Centre this morning.

While praising the two countries for overcoming the challenges caused by the sanctions, he said other countries, too, must be mindful that they can become a victim.

"It is important for me to point out that Iran in particular, despite the years of sanctions, has been able to continue to progress and develop and it proudly stands as a nation with the fourth-highest number of engineers in the world.

"Qatar, too, has been subjected to an embargo and, like Iran, it has managed to rise above it and progress impressively," he said.

Iran has faced sanctions led by the US, a key Saudi Arabian ally. Saudi Arabia and Iran have been long-time rivals.

Leaked diplomatic cables from Saudi Arabia to the US going back to 2008 indicate that the former had coaxed the Western power to launch a military strike on Iran, telling Washington to "cut off the head of the snake".

Saudi Arabia has also led more than 10 Muslim countries to impose an embargo on Qatar, which it accused of funding terrorism. Both Turkey and Iran have given assistance to Qatar in response.

Turkey was among the participants at the KL Summit.

Mahathir, in his closing remarks, did not mention Saudi Arabia but had addressed its accusations, acknowledging that some were "slighted and suspicious" but stressed that the KL Summit was never intended to replace any Muslim platform.

Saudi Arabia, which snubbed the KL Summit, had expressed concern that the gathering was intended to create a competing Muslim grouping.

A rising Saudi Arabia has over the years formed an alliance of Muslim nations and has sought their cooperation to exert its foreign policy including drawing them into a war with Yemen.

Mahathir said the KL Summit had wanted to keep the initial group small to ensure the discussions were more focused.

"During the course of our discussions with leaders from Turkey, Iran and Qatar, we shared the sentiments that for these efforts to work, we need to keep the initial group small so that we can pursue the objectives immediately without having to be distracted by too many opinions and conditions," he said.

He added that the discussions had focused on several pillars, namely development and sovereignty, integrity and good governance, culture and identity, justice and freedom as well as peace, security and defence, trade and

investment, technology and internal governance.

"The other leaders and I have elaborated at length on how pitiful the state of affairs of the Muslim world is today. It was pointed out that we are 1.8 billion strong, which means that Muslims form almost a quarter of the total human population and yet, we lack proportionate representation in all fields on the global platform.

"There is also concern that Muslims in non-Muslim countries are forced to undergo assimilation. We support integration but assimilation to the extent of shedding our religion is unacceptable.

"It was pointed out that if Muslim countries are independent and capable of standing on their own feet, we will not be subjected to such treatment.

"Nevertheless, leaders of the four countries were especially heartened by the brotherly and friendly relations that have strengthened despite the complexities of the region.

"These, to us, are the very essence that will ensure the foundation that we want to build will be successful," he said.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <https://www.malysiakini.com/news/504452>