

**Support for Asean's consensus on Myanmar from external partners welcomed - Hisham**

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**Bernamea**

Support from Asean's external partners, including the United States, is welcomed in implementing the 'Five-Point Consensus' reached by the bloc's leaders to resolve the crisis in Myanmar, said Foreign Affairs Minister Hishammuddin Hussein.

In his statement at the Asean-United States Foreign Ministers' Meeting held virtually on Wednesday, he stressed that the consensus reached in Jakarta is an important breakthrough and a means for Asean to engage and assist Myanmar towards a return to normalcy.

The consensus also reaffirmed the bloc's strong support for a democratic transition, peace process, and inclusive economic development in the country, he added.

“Malaysia reiterates our call for de-escalation of the situation in Myanmar as a matter of priority.

"We urge all parties to contribute to a conducive environment for national dialogue and reconciliation to take place," Hishammuddin said in his speech text made available to the media by the Foreign Ministry.

The five points are: end the violence, hold constructive talks among "all parties concerned", Asean providing aid to Myanmar, a special Asean envoy appointed to conduct talks, and for the envoy to be allowed to visit the country.

On the Rohingya issue, Hishammuddin commended the US in its role in assisting with the situation in the Rakhine state, and welcomed the country's recent pledge of US\$155 million (RM651 million) in support for the Rohingya refugees and host communities in Bangladesh, including the internally displaced Rohingya and other affected people in Myanmar.

At the same time, he said Malaysia is seeking the assistance of its partners such as the US to consider accepting more Rohingya refugees for third-country resettlement from Malaysia.

Hishammuddin also touched on the South China Sea issue, saying that Malaysia remains firm in its position that matters relating to it must be resolved peacefully and constructively through dialogue and consultations, utilising the appropriate diplomatic channels, in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Unclos) 1982.

He stressed that continuous engagement and information sharing were fundamental to avoid any unexpected and unintended incidents in these waters, considering the inherent sensitivities.

“Our channels of communication remain open for the US. It must be noted, that as a claimant state, the South China Sea remains an important matter for us and safeguarding regional stability will always be our top priority.

“We will do our utmost to ensure these waters remain free and open, safe and commercially navigable, without any concerns of hostility,” he said.

The minister also touched on the situation in the Korean Peninsula, noting that the US has a vital role to play with the relevant parties to prevent North Korea from resuming its nuclear build-up, in line with the decisions taken by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

“Resumption of dialogue between the US and North Korea, as well between North Korea and South Korea is crucial towards building a conducive environment for negotiations to continue,” he added.

Confidence building efforts must also proceed among the different parties to build trust, and encourage Pyongyang to remain at the negotiation table, Hishammuddin said.

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