

Citing encroachment, Anifah warns M'sia could suffer Ukraine's fate

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Former foreign affairs minister Anifah Aman has issued a sobering warning that if Malaysia does not check regular encroachments into its territorial waters, it could one day find itself in the same boat as Ukraine, which is facing a Russian invasion.

"The government should take a firmer stance in urging all parties involved (in the Ukraine conflict) to stop their aggression and commit themselves to peace negotiations. It is not enough to just echo the sentiment of other countries.

"Malaysia should stand firm on our sentiment on this issue and take action to stop the aggression because, with the geopolitical issues surrounding our Malaysian waters with trespass after trespass by a big super nation to the east, we could very well be in the same shoes as Ukraine," he said in a statement.

While Anifah did not name the 'super nation', it's worth noting that on Oct 4 last

Year, the Foreign Ministry said it summoned Chinese Ambassador Ouyang Yujing to protest against the presence and activities of Chinese vessels in Malaysian waters.

Putrajaya called its activity "inconsistent with Malaysia's Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1984, as well as the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)."

The statement from the Foreign Ministry added that Malaysia "also protested against previous encroachments by other foreign vessels into our waters".

MH17 tragedy

Anifah, who served as foreign affairs minister from April 2009 to May 2018, said the country's top security priority should be on protecting its Sabah water territory from foreign aggressors.

"The government should not tolerate any threats to the nation's sovereignty and should take all necessary measures to safeguard our borders.

"I urge all parties to be vigilant and take extra measures to keep our territorial integrity intact," said Anifah, who heads Parti Cinta Sabah.

He also highlighted the close ties between Malaysia and Ukraine.

"I am firm, unequivocal, and unwavering in my belief that violence will only lead to more suffering for the people.

"Malaysia has a deep connection to the escalation in Ukraine when six years ago our MH17 plane was shot down while flying over the eastern Ukraine airspace and the wreckage fell on the rebel-held territory of Donetsk.

"We have experienced the profound effects of the issue between Russia and Ukraine. The MH17 tragedy has caused us great grief, and I believe the heightened escalation we are seeing between Russia and Ukraine might only cause more grief to a lot more people," he said.

Anifah warned against the "widespread cyber warfare and misinformation tactics deployed by Russia."

"I am calling all parties involved in the telecommunications and digital systems in Malaysia to enhance our infrastructure security in facing any possible cyber-attacks or misinformation campaigns.

"As Malaysia prepares for the 5G network technology while making sure every

Malaysian has equitable access to it, we must also consider its security aspects.

"The 5G security issue really concerns me as some 5G technology providers have alleged ties to a superpower that constantly encroaches on our waters affecting lives and livelihoods, especially for my fellow Sabahans," he said, calling for Malaysia to maintain a strong and secure digital infrastructure.

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