

## **M'sia to continue with diplomacy on South China Sea issues**

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Malaysia will continue with the diplomatic approach in its engagements with other states, including China, in the common efforts to maintain the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability, and trade, said the Foreign Ministry.

The ministry said this is in line with the provisions of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), among others, dispute resolution by peaceful means and avoidance of the threat or use of force, as signed by Asean member states and China in 2002.

The ministry noted that this is also the approach taken in the ongoing negotiations between Asean member states and China to conclude the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea.

“Asean member states and China are committed to the negotiations towards a COC that is in accordance with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS (the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea),” the statement read.

Malaysia's position on the South China Sea is consistent and remains unchanged, said the ministry, adding that the government is unequivocally and firmly committed to protecting Malaysia's sovereignty, sovereign rights, and interests in its maritime area as depicted by its 1979 Map.

It said Malaysia firmly holds the view that matters relating to the South China Sea must be resolved peacefully and constructively, in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.

By stating the term "negotiation" during the Prime Minister's Question Time in Parliament on April 4, it said Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim made the point that issues relating to the South China Sea should be discussed or resolved in a peaceful manner, utilising existing platforms and through diplomatic channels, without compromising Malaysia's principled position, to avoid any escalation of disputes and the threat or use of force.

In an interview with China Daily during his visit to China last week, Anwar said there is no easy solution for the overlapping territorial claims in the South China Sea but the problem is not insurmountable as long as there is dialogue.

- Bernama

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