

Kyrgyzstan seeks Mahathir's help as peace negotiator

Malaysiakini.com

June 28, 2010

Kyrgyzstan is looking forward to former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad's help to bring peace between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks following two weeks of bloody clashes between the two ethnic groups in the southern part of the country.

The Central Asian country's ambassador to Malaysia, Bakir Uulu Tursunbay, said that Dr Mahathir, as the Malaysian elder statesman and well respected in the Muslim world, would be accepted to both parties and based on his vast experience was suitable to undertake the peace-making role.

Bakir said he had requested to meet Dr Mahathir and hoped to meet him soon to convey the message on the matter.

"We believe our people, both Kyrgyz and Uzbeks, will listen to people like him. As a Muslim and a neutral person, he can contribute positively to peace-making efforts and the confidence-building process," Bakir told Bernama in an interview at his office in Kuala Lumpur.

News reports said that clashes between the ethnic-majority Kyrgyz and the minority Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan this month had killed as many as 2,000 people and forced some 400,000 ethnic Uzbeks to temporarily flee to Uzbekistan.

Bakir said Dr Mahathir was well-known in Kyrgyzstan among the two ethnic groups as he had visited the landlocked and mountainous country of some 5.5 million people twice in 1996 and 1997 and they were also aware of his contributions to Malaysia and the Muslim world.

Bakir said he had noted Dr Mahathir's role in developing Bishkek and Kuala Lumpur bilateral relations as Dr Mahathir was the one who had convinced the then president Askar Akayev, the first president of the country, to open the Kyrgyzstan embassy in Kuala Lumpur in 1997.

Kyrgyzstan and Malaysia established diplomatic ties in 1992, a year after the republic gained independence following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Bakir said Dr Mahathir, who served as Malaysian prime minister for about 22 years and as the chairman of the Perdana Global Peace Organisation had the necessary ability and wide experience in peace-making efforts.

"We sincerely hope he will accept (our invitation). In any conflict or crisis like what we are facing today maybe one side will listen (to the government) and another not.

"So we need a neutral leader who can satisfy both sides," he said.

Bakir said they were also keen on getting opinions from Dr Mahathir on issues related to the economic development of Kyrgyzstan as he believed that in a well-developed economy, there was no place for any conflict.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.

Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/135768>

