

Malaysia-Burma Detainees Swap: Recognition To Tyranny's Regime

MalaysianMirror.com

October 19, 2011

Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)

On Monday, Malaysia's Home Minister, Hishammuddin Hussein and Myanmar's Deputy Foreign Minister, U Maung Myint met in parliament and revealed the proposed arrangement of returning Burma detainees to Burma in order to reduce the number of detainees in Malaysia's detention centres. According to Hishammuddin, there are currently about 1,000 Burma nationals detained in Malaysia.

SUARAM strongly condemns the newly proposed arrangement of returning Burma nationals who are detained in Malaysia's detention centres to the hand of Burmese government which is a prominent human rights violator in this region

By arranging bilateral arrangement with the Burmese government, the Malaysian government is giving greater recognition to the undemocratic and tyranny regime in this region.

As one of the founders of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and a member for the United Nations of Human Rights Council (UNHRC), Malaysia should lead the Burmese government to respect human rights instead of arranging pact to send people where their life could be in danger.

Although the Burmese government recently released at least 120 out of more than 6,000 prisoners in Burma, it does not indicate that human rights, freedom and peace are restored in the country.

The on-going civil wars launched by the Burma army have forced thousands of civilians from ethnic minority territories to flee the country and seek international protection at neighboring countries. Many civilians comprising children and women as well as freedom fighters are systematically persecuted and forced to be forced labours.

Due to such situations happening in Burma, there is a large possibility that a majority of Burma nationals detained in detention centres are genuine refugees. By returning these detainees (refugees) to country or places where they may face persecution or threats to their life, Malaysia is in breach of international customary law of non-refoulement which prohibits the return of people to places where they may face persecution or threats to their life or freedoms.

As such, SUARAM urges the Malaysian government to not carry this arrangement and to immediately give access to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to immigration detention centres in order to assess and process the asylum claims of Burmese detainees and to immediately release whoever found to be genuine refugees.

Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM)

(The views expressed above belongs to the author in its entirety and does not represent the opinion of Malaysian Mirror in any way)

Copyright © 2011 www.malaysianmirror.com

Source: <http://www.malaysianmirror.com/media-buzz-detail/6-nation/55275>