

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	18/8/2011

Joint effort to help 3.2m starving Somalis



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"PUTRAJAYA: Concerned for the famine-stricken people in Somalia, the Tabung Bencana NSTP-Media Prima yesterday kick-started a fundraising campaign to assist them.

The campaign, launched by Perdana Global Peace Foundation (PGPF) president, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is a collaborative effort between NSTP-Media Prima, PGPF and the Malaysian Medical Relief Society (Mercy).

Due to an ongoing drought crisis, more than 3.2 million people in Somalia are on the brink of starvation.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the famine has badly affected two regions of southern Somalia.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir commended the fundraising initiative.

"It is good that we are aware. We sympathise with these people and we have come together to do something to alleviate their suffering.

"I hope Malaysians, whom we claim to be generous people, will



PCPF president Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Media Prima Berhad news and editorial operations executive director Datuk Ahmad A. Talib (left) and Mercy vice-president (1) Associate Professor Dr Mohamed Ikram Mohamed Salleh (right) at the launch of Tabung Bencana NSTP-Media Prima for Somali famine victims yesterday. — NST picture by Afendi Mohamed

lend a helping hand to support this effort to assist the victims," he said. He also made a personal contribution towards the fund.

Media Prima Berhad news and editorial operations executive director Datuk Ahmad A. Talib said they were approached by Mercy to help with the fundraising for the Somalis, and later by PGPF, with a similar intention.

"Since both organisations approached us for a noble cause, we decided to come together and pool our resources for the same objective.

"As a media house with multiple media platforms and channels, we believe that we can always use our strength for good causes such as this, help unify Malaysians from all walks of life and contribute towards the less fortunate, irrespective of race,

religion and boundaries," he said.

Mercy vice-president (1) Associate Professor Dr Mohamed Ikram Mohamed Salleh said the fund would help to create greater awareness about the situation in Somalia.

"Due to the complexity of the situation and also logistical issues, we need a big amount to sustain the relief project in the country so that we can provide them with medical and humanitarian aid."

It was learnt that several organisations had pledged their support. PGPF pledged RM50,000.

Yayasan Al-Bukhary and Emkay Group also pledged RM 750,000 and RM10,000 respectively.

The collections will be channelled towards providing medical aid food and humanitarian needs to the famine victims of Somalia.

Present during the fundraising campaign launch was NSTP group managing editor Datuk Zainul Arifin Mohammed Isa.

The Tabung Bencana NSTP-Media Prima was launched in October 2009, in response to the earthquake that shook Padang, Sumatra and other Southeast Asian countries.

The fund has also covered flood relief missions in Kedah, Perlis, Pagoh in Johor and Miri in Sarawak.

All donations can be banked into Maybank account number 5141-0532-0757.

Cheques can be made payable to "Tabung Bencana NSTP-Media Prima" and sent to the Finance Department. The New Straits Times Press (M) Bhd at 31, Jalan Riong, 59100 Kuala Lumpur.