

16 resolutions passed
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UNANIMOUS: Participants urge Suu Kyi, Myanmar to uphold human rights for Rohingya

KUALA LUMPUR: PARTICIPANTS at the end of the one-day international conference on the "Plight of the Rohingya: Solutions?" yesterday unanimously passed 16 resolutions, including a call for Aung San Suu Kyi and other political parties in Myanmar to promote ethnic rights and equality.

The resolutions stated Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy Party should take an unequivocal and proactive role in ending the plight of the Rohingya.

Presented by Tan Sri Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak, the resolutions also called on the Myanmar government to recognise the legitimate rights of the Rohingya to live in peace and move freely within the country.

"We call on the government of Myanmar to create conditions for the safe and voluntary return of displaced Rohingya to their homes or alternative locations of their choosing without persecution or discrimination," said Ahmad Fuzi, who is Ambassador-at-Large from the Foreign Affairs ministry.

He said the Rohingya deserved the rights to shelter, food, water, health care, education and basic sanitation according to international human rights law, norms and standards.

Participants of the conference also roundly condemned the continuing acts of violence, rape, beatings, burning of dwellings, killings and forced disappearances of the Rohingya and urged the Myanmar government to amend its 1982 Citizenship Act to grant citizenship to the people.

Another adopted resolution reminded the Myanmar government that its failure to resolve the Rohingya problem would undermine its current reform and progress towards national reconciliation, democracy and prosperity.

Asean was urged to play a more active, substantive and effective role in resolving the ethnic minority's problem in the interest of regional peace and stability.

Conference participants agreed that the United Nations should facilitate the establishment of a "cordon sanitaire" (sanitary cordon) to provide internally displaced Rohingya a safe and humane environment pending the attainment of a political solution.

A copy of the adopted resolutions will be sent to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, Myanmar president Thein Sein, the Bangladesh president, Asean's secretary-general, the OIC's secretary-general and the UN secretary-general.

The conference, organised by the Perdana Global Peace Foundation, was attended by representatives from diplomatic corporations, international organisations, parliamentarians, human rights groups, academia, civil society and non-governmental organisations.

At a press conference later, keynote speaker Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had contact with many international leaders and could easily push the resolutions forward.

"We cannot guarantee that all the resolutions will be fulfilled, but we have to try and push them to the heads of states and people with authority.

"The United States is fond of applying pressure on other nations by utilising economic sanctions and this is a situation in which it could be used," said the honorary president of the Perdana Leadership Foundation.

Dr Mahathir said in Malaysia, several organisations had come forward to set up schools for Rohingya refugees.

However, he cautioned that this, too, could become a problem.

"It could tempt others to come here. As it is now, we also have refugees from Laos and Cambodia.

"If people see this country as a good place to go, they will all come here and it may result in our own people not being able to get jobs."

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