

Tun Abdullah Urges Myanmar Muslim Minorities To Give Priority To Education
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 19 (Bernama) -- Former Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi urged the Muslim minority in Asean countries, including those in Myanmar, to give priority to education.

He said that the Muslim communities should seek to empower themselves with education and pursue knowledge which is relevant to their needs in the 21st century.

Abdullah said this in his keynote address at the International Forum on Plight of Muslims in Burma in the 21st century: An Initiative for Solution and the Way Forward, held at the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS), here, Wednesday.

He said that apart from education, the development of youths and economy of the Muslim communities were also important aspects to be considered in order to achieve a better future for the respective Muslim minority.

However, Abdullah, who is patron of IAIS Malaysia, stressed that in trying to achieve this, they should not sought to violence but instead adopt peaceful means and work in tandem with the non-Muslim communities.

He also pointed out that the more developed Muslim communities could also help the less developed ones in order to achieve this success and to secure their rights in society.

Speakers at the half-day forum, organised by IAIS Malaysia, included President of the International Movement for a Just World (JUST) Dr Chandra Muzaffar, while the moderator was Deputy CEO of IAIS Associate Professor Dr Mohamed Azam Mohamed Adil.

Dr Chandra said that it was true that Myanmar has made some changes such as parliamentary elections, changes in economy and was now more open to foreign investment.

"But perhaps these changes will not bring about fundamental transformation in the Myanmar society," he said adding that Asean had a responsibility to try to bring about the change.

"We would like to see Asean governments adopt a more proactive approach to the question of the Rohingyas in Myanmar and of the other minorities," he added.

He said it was important for Asean to speak up and say "lets try to resolve this problem, you must resolve the root of the problem," which is the question of the citizenship and the question of the nature of the regime in Myanmar.

However, Dr Chandra emphasised that the issue must be resolved through non-violence and peaceful methods.

Asean (Association of Southeast Nations) comprise Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore,

Thailand and Vietnam..

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