

Rescue the boat people first, says Marina Mahathir
The Rakyat Post
May 15, 2015
By G. Surach

KUALA LUMPUR, Human rights activist Datin Paduka Marina Mahathir has called on the Malaysian government to deal with the humanitarian situation involving the stranded Rohingyas at sea first before dealing with Myanmar on the issue.

In a Facebook posting, today, Marina said as the current chair of ASEAN, Malaysia must make a strong statement on this issue.

“We can lobby the government to deal with the humanitarian situation first and provide food and shelter to those who have landed and who will land, especially if they are in serious danger.

“They should get pregnant women, children, the elderly and the sick off those boats and get them treated by medical personnel.”

Stressing that the government should no longer keep quiet about the situation in Myanmar as it is affecting Malaysians, Marina also suggested that the government lobby the wider international community and the United Nations (UN) to put pressure on the Burmese government on the genocide they are inflicting on the Rohingyas.

“Seriously crackdown on human traffickers and the corrupt officials who collude with them.

“Sign the international convention on refugees so that we do have an official way of dealing with them, rather than simply treating them as illegals.”

In the meantime, she advised the Malaysian public to not engage a search and rescue mission for the boat people in the open sea as it is risky and dangerous.

“Please do not get into boats and make your way out to the open sea to find boat people to help.

“Firstly we don’t know where they are exactly and they may be way out there.

“Secondly, our navy and maybe other navies may not look too kindly on this and you may get into big trouble for doing that,” she said.

While Marina thanked members of the public who had offered to help in cash out of kindness for the Rohingyas, she stressed that the issue of the boat people arriving on our shores was one that was tied to their countries of origin.

“This needs to be the responsibility of both ‘sending’ and receiving countries and is beyond us as ordinary citizens.

“People cannot be floating on the open sea forever. At some point they have to land. If, as in the case of the Rohingyas, going home is not an option, then they must have somewhere to go.”

Describing the Rohingyas as human beings in totally miserable conditions, Marina said compassion should be the priority of Malaysia.

“Do we want floating boats of dead people on our conscience? At the very least, let us pray for the safety of the men, women and children.”

Copyright © 2015 The Rakyat Post

Source: <http://www.therakyatpost.com/news/2015/05/15/rescue-the-boat-people-first-says-marina-mahathir/>