

Malaysia Condemns Deliberate Targeting Of Civilian Lives In Afghanistan
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 17 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has condemned the deliberate targeting of civilian lives in Afghanistan.

Malaysia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN), Datuk Hussein Haniff, said the highest number of documented civilian casualties were recorded last year, with 3,699 deaths and 6,489 injuries, as reflected in the recent UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in Afghanistan.

"My delegation was particularly alarmed on the increasingly negative impact of the conflict on children.

"We are shocked by the repeated incidents of anti-government armed groups killing and maiming Afghan children, as well as attacking schools and hospitals," he said.

Hussein was speaking at a Security Council briefing on the situation in Afghanistan in New York. The text of his speech was sent here Tuesday.

Hussein said all parties should respect the spirit of international humanitarian law in order to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people towards their national reconciliation and integration process.

He extended condolences to Afghanistan on the tragic loss of over 220 lives and the displacement of over 6,000 families across the country due to last month's extreme weather.

Meanwhile, Malaysia congratulated Afghanistan on its historic transition into the Transformation Decade.

"The entry into the transformation decade will bring forth new challenges, as well as new approaches for collaboration in resolving them," said Hussein.

He said Malaysia firmly believed that the international community should continue to support Afghanistan as the country proceeded down the path it had charted.

"We should now concentrate on looking at approaches to complement and seal the gains which Afghanistan has achieved," he added.

Malaysia also noted the importance for the political and development activities of international organisations active in Afghanistan, as well as other international aid and resources, to be in greater alignment with the priorities set by the Afghan government, he said.

"We believe that at this stage it remains imperative for the UN and the international community to continue to lend their support, encouragement and assistance to Afghanistan through reconstruction and redevelopment efforts for rebuilding the country," he said.

Hussein said that while Afghanistan endeavoured to sustain peace and stability in the country, Malaysia remained fully committed in its peace-building efforts and provision of assistance to Afghanistan.

"I would like to take this opportunity in the council to record our appreciation to the Afghanistan government for their invitation for Malaysia to join the International Stabilisation Assistance Force (ISAF).

"Prior to the ending of the ISAF mandate, a Malaysian medical team had been stationed in the country to provide medical, dental and healthcare services to the Afghan civilian population," he said.

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