

**ASEAN Should Call For Emergency Meeting To Resolve Rohingya Issue - Mahathir
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PUTRAJAYA, May 18 (Bernama) -- ASEAN should call for an emergency meeting to discuss and resolve the Rohingya issue in a collective manner, said former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"This is an external problem and no longer an internal one, as it involves all parties concerned. Therefore, ASEAN needs to put pressure on Myanmar for its inhumane actions where the Rohingyas should not be killed just like that.

"ASEAN should call for a meeting of all its foreign ministers at least, if not aides of government to discuss and tell Myanmar, you (Myanmar) cannot do this to your people and create a problem for us."

Dr Mahathir said this here today when asked to comment on the Rohingya issue after launching Volume 2 of a book containing his selected letters to several world leaders when he was Malaysia's prime minister for 22 years.

It was reported that 1,158 Rohingya and Bangladeshi refugees, including women and children, landed by boat in Langkawi, Kedah on May 10.

Asked on the Vietnamese refugees that were brought into Malaysia during his tenure, Dr Mahathir said: "We brought in the Vietnamese and established (a refugees camp on) one island (Pulau Bidong) specially for them. But, it is only for transit purpose and they were only there before going to other places.

"We helped them a lot. But this Rohinyga issue is too big a problem for Malaysia alone to handle. I don't think Malaysia had given asylum to any Vietnamese."

Dr Mahathir also expressed disappointment that Nobel peace prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi did not care enough for the plight of the ethnic Rohingya Muslims.

Earlier, the former premier who took a few questions from the audience, said Myanmar must give fair treatment to the Rohingya issue and solve it efficiently in their own country, and not let it spill over to other countries.

To a question on the Islamic State (IS), he said: "Islam forbids killing, whether of Muslims or non-Muslims. The Quran underlines tolerance towards other religions. This is taught in the Quran. We can learn a lot from the Quran but we don't do that."

Volume 2 of the book titled, "Dr Mahathir's Selected Letters to World Leaders" is a follow-up to Volune 1 published in 2008 which was so well received by readers that it was republished nine times.

The book's editor Tan Sri Abdullah Ahmad said Volume 2 contained 73 of Dr Mahathir's letters which had not been published before, which underlined Malaysia's diplomacy during the 1987-2003 period, especially between Malaysia and Singapore.

The letters include those from Dr Mahathir and three US presidents (George H. Bush, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush), three British prime ministers (Margaret Thatcher, John Major and Tony Blair), Pakistan presidents General Pervez Musharraf and Benazir Bhutto, Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, Libyan leader Muammar Ghaddafi, Cuban president Fidel Castro and South African president Nelson Mandela.

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