

## **US, Japan Offer Help To Solve Rohingya Issue, Says Najib**

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**From D. Arul Rajoo**

SENDAI, May 26 (Bernama) -- The United States and Japan have indicated their willingness to help Malaysia and ASEAN solve the issue of ethnic Rohingya refugees.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the Malaysian government would discuss further on the type of assistance needed.

To a question if the US was willing to take the Rohingyas as it did with the Vietnamese boat people from 1970s-2001, Najib said they had indicated that they would consider such a move.

"The Rohingya boat people is a serious matter. As we want to solve it through ASEAN solutions, our capacity is limited and we need international assistance," he said after having a dialogue with students at the Tohoku University here.

The first boat people from Vietnam landed on the east coast of Malaysia in May 1975, and more than 255,000 were given temporary asylum in Malaysia, before most of them resettled in western countries and last camp closed in 2001.

Currently, Kedah is facing a flood of illegal Rohingya and Bangladeshi immigrants when 1,158 of them landed in Langkawi on May 11.

Malaysia and Indonesia have agreed to provide temporary shelter for the 7,000 illegals who are believed to be still in international waters, provided that the resettlement and repatriation process would be done in one year by the international community.

Najib said the Malaysian government would do its level best to address the Rohingya issue to avoid it from becoming a catastrophe.

On the discovery of mass graves of human trafficking victims at the Malaysia-Thailand border, Najib said it was a brutal and abnoxious act.

"We will combat human trafficking...it is the most cruel crime and we will ask cooperation from Thailand to curb these activities," he said.

On foreign media report that gave the picture that Malaysian security forces were purportedly involved or "close their eyes" on such activities, he said so far it could not be verified if such allegations were true.

"It may have been done by foreigners at the border. I am told by the security forces that the terrain there is rough and without access, this is why they do not carry out patrols there," he added.

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