

OIC Islamic Solidarity Fund Dispatches Urgent Assistance To Rohingya Refugees

Bernama

May 30, 2015

By Tengku Noor Shamsiah Tengku Abdullah

SINGAPORE, May 30 (Bernama) -- The Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) announced the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya refugees fleeing persecution in their Myanmar homeland on crowded unseaworthy boats with many having perished on the perilous journey and thousands remain trapped on turbulent seas.

In a statement, OIC said during the meeting of the OIC Contact Group on Rohingya, held on the sidelines of the 42nd Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Kuwait on Wednesday and Thursday, an initial grant of US\$200,000 (US\$1-RM3.66) was approved.

It said the assistance would be channeled through local humanitarian NGOs working in the countries hosting the Rohingya refugees, under the supervision of the ISF.

At the OIC Ministerial Conference in Kuwait, the OIC Special Envoy for Myanmar, Tan Sri Syed Hamid Albar, in his address, raised the plight of the Rohingya refugees.

He also called for urgent search and rescue operations to save Rohingya refugees and Bangladeshi migrants at sea who were at risk of death and abuse.

Syed Hamid reiterated the OIC's call to the governments and peoples of the region to provide immediate relief and shelter to the refugees.

He further reiterated the OIC Secretary General's call to address the root causes of the crisis through poverty reduction and inclusive development in Rakhine State, Myanmar and in Bangladesh as part of a comprehensive long-term solution.

Meanwhile, the OIC also participated in a conference in Oslo, Norway on "Ending the Systematic Persecution of the Rohingya in Myanmar" on May 26.

Dina Madani delivered a statement on behalf of the OIC Special Envoy to Myanmar at the High Level Opening Session along with former Norwegian Prime Minister Kjetil Bondevik, former Prime Minister of Malaysia Tun Dr Mahathir Mohammad, and former UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, Tomas Quintana.

The Oslo conference addressed the situation on the ground in IDP camps and Rohingya villages in Rakhine State as well as the humanitarian crisis of the Rohingya boat people in the Andaman Sea and Straits of Malacca.

The statement of the OIC Special Envoy emphasised that the argument that the Rohingya were not indigenous people but illegal immigrants from Bangladesh was unacceptable.

The Rohingya are an indigenous community of Myanmar who have been there for generations and were excluded from the ethnic minority list in the 1982 Citizenship Act, the statement said.

The OIC had repeatedly called upon the Government of Myanmar to have an inclusive transparent policy towards ethnic and religious minorities, including the Rohingya Muslims, as an integral part of this process and treat them as an ethnic minority in accordance with UN General Assembly resolution 238/64.

While the OIC engaged in wide ranging efforts to alleviate the plight of the refugees in the current crisis, it also urged the Myanmar government to abide by its obligations under international law and human rights covenants and take all necessary measures to stop the violence and discrimination against Rohingya Muslims and provide protection for their life, dignity and property.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2015 BERNAMA

Source : <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/newsindex.php?id=1139723>