

The Netherlands NGO Applauds Malaysia's Assistance To Rohingya Refugees

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From Nik Nurfaqih Nik Wil

PADANG BESAR (THAILAND), May 31 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Government's efforts in assisting the plight of Rohingya refugees to date, has received the thumbs-up from a Netherlands non-governmental organisation (NGO).

Salaamah Wal Adaalah president, Nourdeen Wilderman said he and his team were impressed with the treatment accorded by the Malaysian Government to the refugees at the Belantik Detention Depot Centre in Kedah.

"It looks very good and very nice, we are not able to enter but we saw from the outside, we were really impressed, they are looking good," he told Bernama and TV3 when met on a visit with the NGO at a mass grave believed to be that of Rohingya refugees discovered at Ban Ta Lok here recently.

The discovery of the mass grave located about 40 minutes' drive from the Malaysia-Thai border in Padang Besar was also believed to have led to the discovery of another mass grave at Wang Kelian, Malaysia, about two weeks later.

Nourdeen, who has been dealing with Rohingya issues for more than 10 years, applauded the moves and attention given by the Malaysian Government in handling the issue.

He however, said serious action needed to be taken by all countries in handling the Rohingya issue, and the need to focus on the beginning of the issues, that is, the ethnic cleansing by Myanmar.

"It's like a virus. First, you have the ethnic (Rohingya) cleansing, then the influx of refugees (Rohingya) in Bangladesh, then you have people (the refugees) who are dying in boats. Then, because they have become weak, you have people who see (the opportunity to) market (them), and then the human traffickers.

"At the end of the day, we see here mass graves. What you see here behind us, is what happened when you hoped that the problem will eventually solve itself," he added.

Nourdeen and three other members of the NGO plan to be in Malaysia for a week, and have been here for the last four days, visiting several significant places related to the Rohingya issue.

They did a quick stop in Padang Besar, Thailand for about three hours yesterday, before returning to Malaysia.

Salaamah Wal Adaalah is an NGO that is supported through charity and endowment and only focuses on the Rohingya issue.

Apart from delivering aid to Rohingya refugees worldwide, the NGO had been touring to create awareness on the issue.

To date, 35 bodies, believed to be victims of human trafficking activities, had been exhumed since the discovery of graves in Bukit Wang Burma, Wang Kelian, Perlis last Monday.

The bodies were exhumed from 139 graves discovered by the authorities at 28 transit camps set up by human trafficking syndicates along the Perlis-Thailand border.

On May 10, a total of 1,158 Bangladeshi illegal immigrants and Rohingya refugees were reported to have landed in Langkawi.

About 10,000 more are said to be still at sea and attempting to land in nearby countries.

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