

Haze: Indonesia Has Sufficient Resources, Rejects Singapore's Offer Of Assistance

Bernama

Oct 2, 2015

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SINGAPORE, Oct 2 (Bernama) -- Indonesia has clarified at a meeting between officials of both countries that it has sufficient resources of its own to tackle the haze.

As such, it said there was no need to call on the assistance offered by Singapore at this time.

In response to media queries on the visit by Singapore officials to Jakarta to discuss issues pertaining to the haze, the ministry of environment and water resources (MEWR) said a small team of Singaporean officials led by MEWR permanent secretary Choi Shing Kwok, met with Indonesian Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Gen (Rtd) Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan and Head of National Disaster Management Agency Willem Rampangilei in Jakarta yesterday.

The meeting was convened at the invitation of the Indonesian side.

The Singapore delegation was briefed by the Indonesians on measures being undertaken by the Indonesian Government in Sumatra and Kalimantan to tackle land and forest fires which caused transboundary haze pollution in Singapore and the region.

In the context of this briefing and the discussion that followed, MEWR said Singapore reiterated and explained its offer of assistance to tackle the fires, including the provision of a Chinook helicopter to conduct water bombing and a C-130 aircraft for cloud seeding operations.

It said Indonesia clarified at the meeting that it had sufficient resources of its own and did not need to call on the assistance offered by Singapore at this time.

The meeting also discussed law enforcement measures undertaken by Indonesia against errant companies, and Singapore explained how its Transboundary Haze Pollution Act allowed the island republic to also take legal action against offenders who caused transboundary haze in Singapore to supplement Indonesia's actions, while respecting Indonesia's sovereignty.

In this regard, Singapore also reiterated and explained its request for Indonesia to share information that could help identify companies suspected of causing such fires.

This was being considered by the Indonesian side who would respond in due course, said MEWR.

The haze has blanketed Singapore in recent weeks, to the extent the government was forced to close all schools when the air quality reached very unhealthy level on Sept 25.

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