

Tun M makes intervention on Rohingya issues at ASEAN Summit

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By Massita Ahmad

SINGAPORE, Nov 14 (Bernama) – Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has made an intervention on Rohingya issues during the 33rd ASEAN Summit.

“I did mention about the situation in Rakhine state. We urged (that) efforts should be made to correct the wrongdoings,” he said to the Malaysian media after receiving a courtesy call from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Chief, Christine Lagarde here.

Dr Mahathir, who is here for the 33rd Asean Summit and its related Meetings, said he did not raise the issues personally with Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi but through the intervention.

Currently, more than 100,000 Rohingya refugees are in Malaysia but not all of them are registered with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

It was reported that about 700,000 people from the Rohingya Muslim minority fled to neighbouring Bangladesh since last August following an army crackdown that the United Nations said amounted to ethnic cleansing.

Meanwhile, at a press conference, Dr Mahathir said : “I think ASEAN leaders are very diplomatic. We do not make strong statements against each other.”

He was asked whether Malaysia pushed for a stronger ASEAN statement on the Rohingya issue.

Asked further whether the issue of Rohingya came up during the ASEAN Summit dinner last night, Dr Mahathir said : “Well we did talk to each other. But not directly about Rakhine

state or Rohingya.”

“But during our course of discussion with the ASEAN countries, several people raised the question. So did I. But mainly the call was to urge and try to resolve this problem,” he added.

On whether he spoke to Suu Kyi directly, the premier said : “I spoke directly but not on that issue.”

Asked further on what both of them talked about, Dr Mahathir replied : “Casual things.”

Throughout the Summit, most of the time Dr Mahathir and Suu Kyi would be seen sitting side by side as their seatings followed the Alphabetical order of the country they represented.

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