

## **Malaysia, Pakistan reaffirm commitment to work closely on Islamic issues**

**BERNAMA**

**23/03/2019**

**From Kamarul Ariffin Md Yassin**

ISLAMABAD, March 23 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Pakistan have reaffirmed their commitment to collaborate more closely on issues affecting the Muslim world, including taking joint efforts in underscoring Muslims' sensitivities on holy personalities and religious beliefs.

In a joint statement in conjunction with the three-day official visit of Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to Pakistan since Thursday, as the leaders of two peace-loving Islamic nations, Dr Mahathir and his Pakistan counterpart Imran Khan agreed to increase their collaborative efforts to uphold the true values of Islam in international fora while strengthening the solidarity of the Muslim Ummah( community).

In the statement, both leaders also stressed that terrorism cannot be associated with any religion or belief.

“ Both leaders exchanged views on the situation in Palestine and in Rakhine State, Myanmar involving Rohingya Muslims. On the Palestinian issue, both countries agreed to contribute positively in other forums, especially in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Committee of Six on Palestine, of which Malaysia and Pakistan are members,” the statement said.

The statement added that Malaysia took note of the massive counter-terrorism efforts that Pakistan has successfully undertaken in an effort to eliminate terrorism.

It added that both prime ministers also agreed on the need to enhance educational ties

particularly on institutions of higher learning, technical and vocational training between Malaysia and Pakistan.

“They agreed that close cooperation in higher education and vocational training is a critical element to the next phase of relationship. Tourism and youth exchanges have also been identified as key drivers in promoting greater people-to-people contact and sustainable socio-economic growth, and in fostering mutual understanding between the two countries,” it added

It said Malaysia also invited Pakistan to participate in the upcoming Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) from March 26-30, 2019.

The statement said the two leaders also took note that the 1st Bilateral Consultations between the Foreign Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, as a mechanism to intensify the engagements between both sides, was successfully held on Feb 25, 2019 here.

“ The 1st Bilateral Consultations between both countries had covered various issues of mutual concerns such as debt management and anti-corruption, defence cooperation, labour matters, consular matters, as well as, regional and international dynamics,” it said.

Both Leaders also acknowledged the successful convening of the 13th Joint Committee on Defence Cooperation (JCDC) which was held from Feb 26- 27, 2019 in Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Mahathir undertook the official visit at the invitation of Imran, whereby Dr Mahathir was the guest-of- honour at the Pakistan Day Parade on Saturday.

During the visit, Dr Mahathir was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the Prime Minister’s House and both leaders held a restricted meeting as well as fruitful and in-depth discussions, which took place in a warm and cordial atmosphere, and covered a wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest.

“ (The) Malaysian Prime Minister expressed his sincere appreciation to the President of Pakistan Arif Alvi for hosting a State Banquet and bestowing him with the Nishan-e-Pakistan (Order of Pakistan), Pakistan’s highest civil award ,” it said.

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Source: <http://www.bernama.com/en/news.php?id=1708421>