

**M'SIA WILL NOT CONDONE VIOLENCE TO RESOLVE ANY CONFLICT IN SOUTHERN THAILAND, PM ANWAR SAYS**

**DATO' SERI ANWAR BIN IBRAHIM**

**NEWS**

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BANGKOK, Feb 9 (Bernama) — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia will not condone violence to resolve any conflict in southern Thailand.

Anwar, who is personally known to many in the south, pledged to “do whatever is required” to facilitate the peace process in southern Thailand.

“I have come here with a very clear categorical message that the (Malaysian) government does not condone any sort of violence to resolve conflicts.

“We will exercise our rights as friends and family to express our legitimate concerns whilst acknowledging that South Thailand is an internal issue within Thailand.

“It is our duty as good neighbours and family to do whatever required to facilitate the (peace) process.

“That’s why we agree to appoint an acceptable facilitator from a retired chief of our armed forces to assist and give our assistance,” he said during a joint press conference with his counterpart Prayith Chan o-cha after they meet here today.

Anwar is on a two-day official visit to Thailand starting today.

Malaysia is a facilitator for the peace dialogue process in ending the decades-old conflict in Southern Thailand.

Former chief of defence force Tan Sri Zulkifli Zainal Abidin has been appointed as the new Malaysian chief facilitator effective Jan 1, 2023.

Meanwhile, Anwar said building trust is vital in resolving the conflict in southern Thailand.

“It is unfortunate these small skirmishes have led to distrust, resentment and we have to appeal to both forces, in Thailand and the South to understand that peace is a paramount situation.

“Therefore, I want to start with some elements of trust within us to resolve this problem (trust) with understanding.

“I have asked the permission of the prime minister (Prayuth) to allow me to express my concerns through peaceful means and resolution.

“It’s up to the committees, joint border committee, to work together with their Thai counterparts and have frank discussions and build trust,” he said.

Discussions were held between the government and insurgent groups since 2013 but the talks came to a grinding halt when the army took control in Thailand a year later. Talks resumed without the involvement of the main parties, including Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN).

General Wanlop Rugsanoah headed the panel for peace dialogue in the Southernmost provinces in Thailand (PEDP).

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