


Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi: Conduct Diplomacy with Heart

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In the past month, Foreign Affairs Minister Retno Marsudi has been conducting intensive diplomacy to help resolve the humanitarian conflict afflicting the Muslim Rohingyas in Rakhine, Myanmar. According to the Minister, this was one of the duties of the Republic of Indonesia to carry out its free and active foreign policy for restoring world peace. "I have been conducting careful diplomacy to avoid possible outcries, because the Rohingya conflict is a a very sensitive issue in a sovereign country, which we have to respect," said Minister Marsudi during the Hamengku Buwono IX Award ceremony at Kraton Yogyakarta on Friday night (30/12).

The country's first female Foreign Minister admitted it was not easy to resolve the conflict in Rakhine as the faith sentiment had triggered the conflict there. To be able to do her job, she had consulted with religious leaders in Indonesia. Previously, President Joko Widodo instructed her to meet with Myanmar's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, in Myanmar. Following this meeting, Retno and Suu Kyi agreed to further talks with ASEAN foreign ministers during which Indonesia proposed a number of options, including for Myanmar to open access to a humanitarian mission and media.




Retno also visited the refugee camps in Kutupalong, Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, and met with Bangladeshi Prime Minister and Foreign Minister to hold talks on the issue.

The ongoing diplomacy has not soon brought peace to Myanmar, but both countries, Myanmar and Bangladesh, have agreed to appoint respective special envoys to resolve border issues and refugees. The Myanmar government also appreciated the measures taken by Indonesia to help resolve the conflict there. "All of these measures take a long process, detailed, and careful as it is about the sovereignty of a state," she added.

The Minister, in her remarks accepting the HB IX Award, said the award would encourage and drive her and other diplomats to work even better. "In conducting our foreign policy, I always work with all my heart. I always ask our junior diplomats to work with their hearts, not just because we're being paid, so you won't ever feel tired," she said.

The Rector of UGM, Prof. Ir. Dwikorita Karnawati, M.Sc., Ph.D., said the granting of the award to FM Retno Marsudi was the result of rigorous selection by the UGM Board of Professors who found her to be deserving of the HB IX Award this year.

The HB Award is an award to Indonesian nationals with achievements and who render service that carries forward the aspiration and struggle made by the late King Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX. "We saw Retno Marsudi as the most appropriate person this year for her outstanding service to humanity, diplomacy of Indonesia's sovereignty, and protection of Indonesian nationals abroad," said the Rector.



Retno is the 17th recipient of the HB IX Award among other national figures. The present Sultan of Keraton Yogyakarta, Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono X, said the HB IX Award was a tradition and a form of respect. “Retno Marsudi is a person who has strong commitment to humanity and promotes world peace,” he said. According to Sri Sultan, she deserved the HB IX Award as she had passed on the aspirations of Sri Sultan HB IX. “He was a freedom fighter, a nationalist with strong aspirations to develop the nation, technology and humanity. With those hopes, I would like to congratulate Minister Retno Marsudi for receiving the award,” he concluded.

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