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Greater education needed to address misconceptions against Rome Statute

By Qistina Sallehuddin - June 5, 2024 @ 12:13am



Greater education is needed to overcome existing misconceptions about the Rome Statute, United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said. NSTP/MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

KUALA LUMPUR: Greater education is needed to overcome existing misconceptions about the Rome Statute, United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said.

This, Turk said, will enable the people to understand the true spirit of the statute.

"I think what is probably needed is further education about what it (the statute) means for the country, (and how) to overcome some of the misconceptions that exist about joining the ICC statute," he told reporters yesterday.

He said this in response to enquiries on how the UN could assist Malaysia if it were to reconsider the ratification of the Rome Statute.

Turk is undertaking a working visit to Malaysia as part of the country's continued engagement and collaboration with the UN to raise human rights awareness and strengthen literacy for the enjoyment of human rights by fellow Malaysians.

In 2019, the government under the Pakatan Harapan (PH) administration decided to revoke the Rome Statute following concerns that the ratification of the treaty would undermine the country's sovereignty and Malay rights.

Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the decision to withdraw from the treaty was due to the confusion the issue had created in the country and not because of claims that the move could harm Malaysia.

The move, however, was met with backlash from human rights groups and activists, who described the move as "a sad day for human rights defenders."

The treaty, which created the International Criminal Court (ICC), reflects the international community's commitment to fight impunity against perpetrators of mass crimes, namely war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, and aggression.