

CNS8500

U PR 25-05 00227 RA028

aae

Mahathir-UNDP

hm

KUALA LUMPUR, May 25 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri ^(P) Dr Mahathir Mohamad today questioned the criteria used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in determining that the level of human freedom in Malaysia was below that of Israel.

The Prime Minister said that the UNDP's claim had no basis and was made purposely to tarnish the image of Malaysia in the interest of certain parties.

+ It's an absurd allegation ... we all know that the Israelis were killing the Arabs there ... chasing them away from their homes. Are we doing that here? + he asked a press conference after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting here.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is Umno President, was earlier asked on a UNDP report which said that Malaysia had a low human rights rating while its human development rating was high.

In a report announced by UNDP's Assistant Administrator for Asia and Pacific, Krishnan Gopal Singh, here two days ago, the agency stated that the level of human rights in Malaysia was below that of Israel and several Latin American and East European countries.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said he did not know why the UNDP made such a statement when it had never done so in the past.-- more

♥25/05/17-18MST

CNS8510

U PR 25-05 00141 RA029

aae

Mahathir-UNDP 2 Kuala Lumpur

He wanted to know who had fixed the criteria for UNDP to make such a comparison and what right had it got to determine the morality of a group. Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir cited an example of a country in Europe which allowed boys and girls of 12 years to sleep together and have sex.

+ Is it lack of human rights if we do not allow such a practice, + he asked.

He said in some countries, one was allowed to appear nude in the public or screen obscene films in cinemas + but we will not allow such a thing at any cost. +

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir regretted that adverse reports were made only on Asian countries, whose peoples were non-white.-- more

♥25/05/17-29MST

CNS8540

U PR 25-05 00135 RA030

aae

Mahathir-UNDP 3 Kuala Lumpur

He said parties which accused Malaysia of being racist were themselves more racist because they treated their citizens based on the colour of their skins.

He also touched on certain countries which gave their press the freedom to criticise and say what they liked about weak developing countries.

+ Powerful countries can do what they like ... even if they make mistakes they are not highlighted by the press, + he said.

He said while in a Western country recently he saw people without homes sleeping in parks in pitiful condition.

The press in that country did not highlight that but instead published pictures and stories about people in developing countries sleeping on the road side, he said.-- Bernama

♥25/05/17-38MST