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Mahathir-Israel (With pix)

M'SIA NOT PREPARED TO ESTABLISH DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH ISRAEL, SAYS DR M
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 28 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is still not prepared to establish diplomatic relations with Israel as "many things have yet to be done by that country" before it could be accorded recognition, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"Although there are Gulf states which have established diplomatic relations with Israel, we are not prepared because we feel that many things have yet to be done by Israel before we can accord it our recognition," the Prime Minister told a press conference after a visit to Angkasapuri.

He hoped that Israel would make progress towards this end soon.

Although he regarded the agreement between Israel and Palestine as "a most astounding development", Dr Mahathir felt that the agreement alone was not adequate.

He said that this was because there was no declaration on the part of Israel for a Palestinian state. -- more

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Besides, there was no declaration from Israel that they would not resort to terrorism in efforts to achieve its national objectives whereas the Palestinians were required not to use terrorist arms, he said.

"We know that even this minor agreement will not be implemented. As such, we have to wait before we take action to accept the state of Israel," he said.

However, the Prime Minister also warned that the problem was still not over due to the attitude of the Gulf states themselves which were at loggerheads with each other.

He said that this situation had resulted in some parties not supporting the accord as they knew that not all would be granted what they were claiming.

Asked on the role of the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in dealing with the various world problems throughout the year, the Prime Minister said that he was not satisfied with the efforts taken by both bodies and the attitude of Europe. -- more

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He was however happy that the United States had changed its attitude and voted along with the Islamic and other smaller nations to have the arms embargo against Bosnia lifted to enable the Bosnians to acquire weapons to protect themselves.

Dr Mahathir said that the arms embargo had benefitted the Serbs who were able to obtain arms supply whereas the Bosnians were helpless as they were surrounded by enemies.

On the OIC, he said that the body could not take action whatsoever because of difference of views and was obviously weak and incapable of despatching troops to Bosnia. -- Bernama

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