

Why we cannot recognise Israel yet

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Efforts to establish diplomatic relations between Malaysia and Israel have met with a setback following the Jewish State's action at the UN General Assembly in voting against the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the conditions for Malaysia to recognise Israel have not been met since the

Palestinian people have not obtained their freedom.

He said the step taken by Israel and the United States in voting against the motion showed that the two countries were not very sincere in freeing Palestine.

"That is why we cannot recognise Israel yet," he told a Press conference at the end of the second day's proceedings of the Umno General Assembly at Putra World Trade Centre here.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the action of the US and Israel to vote against the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination at the General Assembly's social humanitarian and cultural committee on Thursday.

They were the only countries which cast the negative votes as the UN committee reaffirmed with a big majority to give the Palestinians their right. The vot-

ing saw 124 countries agreeing, while 27 abstained.

The resolution now goes to the Assembly plenary where it is certain to be endorsed.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia had always believed that the Palestinian people should be given the right to self-rule.

"The full conditions to recognise Israel have therefore not been met," he added.