

25 MAR 1997

PAS-Protest

PAS MEMBERS PROTEST PRESENCE OF ISRAELI CRICKET TEAM

KUALA LUMPUR, March 25 (Bernama) -- About 1,000 PAS members, led by the party's deputy president Abdul Hadi Awang, staged a demonstration today to protest the presence here of a cricket team from Israel.

The demonstrators demanded that the government cancel the visas issued to members of the Israeli team and deport them immediately, saying the decision to allow them to enter Malaysia tantamounts to recognising the Jewish state.

The protesters gathered at the Merdeka Square at 9am and they then proceeded to the Prime Minister's Department where Abdul Hadi and six Pas Youth leaders handed over a memorandum to the Prime Minister's Political Secretary (I) Datuk Aziz Shamsuddin in his office.

The Youth leaders are the movement's chief Abu Bakar Chik, vice-chief Mohamad Sabu and executive council members Dr Mohd Hatta Ramli, Sallehuddin Ayob, Mahfuz Omar and Abdul Latif Ibrahim.

The protesters carried placards condemning the Israeli government and burnt Israeli flags at Merdeka Square and the entrance of the Prime Minister's Department.

As they left the Prime Minister's department, the PAS leaders were accompanied by several Home Ministry officials.

Police kept control of the situation until the demonstrators dispersed at about noon.

The Israeli team is here to compete in the 21-day International Cricket Council Trophy which began yesterday.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said on Sunday that the government allowed the team to participate here to show the Israeli visitors how people of different races and religions can live together in peace in a country like Malaysia.

Abdul Hadi said in a statement that PAS regrets that while the Israeli government is illegally opening up new settlements in occupied Palestinian territory, Malaysia "shamelessly" permits Israelis to set foot in this country.

He said the party is disappointed with the government for issuing visas to the Israeli team despite the fact that Malaysia does not have diplomatic relations with Israel. -- BERNAMA

ARA/SN SK