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Hamid-Israel

M'SIA STILL DOES NOT RECOGNISE ISRAEL, SAYS SYED HAMID

By: Amin Husaini Harun

NEW YORK, Sept 29 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will not have diplomatic ties with Israel as long as several issues are not resolved, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said Tuesday.

"Malaysia sticks to her stand of not having diplomatic ties as long as several issues, including the Palestinian issue, are not resolved and that total peace in West Asia is not achieved," he said.

Syed Hamid told this to Malaysian journalists covering Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's visit to the United Nations here.

A Singapore newspaper on Monday quoted a report from Israel that Syed Hamid and his Israeli counterpart met on the sidelines of their official duties while at the UN.

Syed Hamid said he did not hold any official meeting at all with the Israeli foreign minister David Levy as reported because Malaysia does not have diplomatic ties with Israel.

"Leaders and diplomats from Malaysia, as a member country of the UN and the Security Council, often meet from time to time with fellow leaders and diplomats from a host of countries, including Israel, during the UN assemblies. This is a normal practice in the course of their daily duties," he said.

It was during such informal meetings that Malaysia took the opportunity to explain the reason for not having diplomatic ties and to urge the Tel Aviv regime to implement its peace accord with Palestine, he said.

Syed Hamid said while Malaysia did not practise racism by maintaining animosity against individual Jews, Malaysia's stand against the Israeli regime remained unchanged.

The minister explained that it has been the government's policy to send congratulatory messages to countries or their leaders on the occasion of their national days or celebrations.

-- BERNAMA

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