

15/11/2000

Dr M: Consultant to be engaged to reform OIC

Farush Khan in Doha

TAKING the cue from Malaysia, the Organisation of Islamic Conference will engage a consultant to find ways to reform the body so that it becomes more effective in protecting the interest of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the need for the reformation was discussed at the on-going session.

He said this on Monday evening during a Press conference at the Sheraton Doha where the OIC summit, participated by leaders of 56 member countries, is being held. The three-day summit ended yesterday.

Dr Mahathir also said that Malaysia was prepared to take part in any United Nations operations to protect Palestinians, who were now facing Israel's aggression.

"We are in agreement that the UN should step in and provide a force to protect the Palestinians. Malaysia is quite prepared to participate (in such a force)."

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat is pushing for a UN protection force for Palestine which has been rocked by seven weeks of violence, causing the death of over 200 innocent people, mostly Palestinians. Many more were wounded.

The reform, he said, was necessary to ensure that the OIC renewed both its relevance and effectiveness.

Speaking at the summit just before leaving for Kuala Lumpur on Monday night, Dr Mahathir pledged RM1 million for the OIC fund.

Asked on the effectiveness of OIC meetings, Dr Mahathir said the OIC could make very strong statements over the Palestine issue, but "people are waiting for us to do something that will reflect the contents of the statements."

Asked on who the communique, to be issued at the end of the summit, would be directed at, he said it would be directed at Israel as well as the United States, the main supporter of the Jewish State.

Dr Mahathir pointed out that there was a possibility that the communique would not be symbolic only.

"People can be driven up the wall ... they will have to turn around and do something about it. And at this moment children are being killed just for throwing stones. I think there is a limit to all these things."

He said the OIC countries were now willing to suggest drastic action to show their displeasure at what was happening in Palestine due to Israeli intransigency.

The Prime Minister welcomed steps taken by Muslim countries to sever ties with Tel Aviv as was done by Qatar just before the beginning of the summit on Nov 12.

"That is a positive action to display our unhappiness with the way the Palestinians are being treated."

Meanwhile Bernama reported in Kuala Lumpur that Dr Mahathir returned home yesterday morning in an executive jet after attending the OIC summit.

His wife, Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, received him on arrival at the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang.

(END)