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KL, Jakarta condemn Israel's use of force

LANGKAWI, Tues. - Malaysia and Indonesia today jointly condemned the use of force by Israeli armed forces against the Palestinians and called on all parties to restore peace as soon as possible.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said both countries hoped to see an end to the fightings between Israel and Palestine and peace to prevail amongst their people.

"This is not the way for countries to conduct their relationship especially if they had declared they want to have peace," he said when asked what is Malaysia's and Indonesia's stand on the Israel-Palestine issue.

Speaking at a joint Press conference with Indonesian president Abdurrahman Wahid after a bilateral meeting, Dr Mahathir said both countries deplored the use of force by Israel as it had caused the death of more than 100 people, especially children.

Abdurrahman said Malaysia and Indonesia agreed that there should be further peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Alwi Shihab also issued a joint communique condemning the use of force by the Israeli armed forces.

The statement said both Governments and the people of Malaysia and Indonesia mourned the deaths of the Palestinians and offered their profound condolences.

Both countries said they held Israeli right wing leader Ariel Sharon responsible for the latest bloodshed, saying his provocative visit to the third holiest Muslim shrine Al Haram Al Sharif on Sept 28 was the cause of the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories.

They urged the United Nations Security Council "to bring to justice those who are directly and wilfully responsible for these tragic deaths".

Malaysia and Indonesia also welcomed the Security Council's resolution calling on Israel to abide its legal obligations under the 4th Geneva Convention relating to the protection of civilians in times of war.

The statement also stated that Indonesia fully supported Malaysia's proposal that a special session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers Meeting be convened in Jerusalem to discuss the Palestinian issue.

Malaysia and Indonesia also commended the efforts of all parties in convening the Sharm el Shaik Summit in Egypt and hoped it would succeed in addressing the latest issue or in the very least, resuming peace negotiations.

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