

31 OCT 2000

Communique

KL, RIYADH URGE FOR RESTORATION OF PALESTINIAN RIGHTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 31 (Bernama) -- Malaysia and Saudi Arabia strongly believe that there will never be peace and stability in West Asia unless the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are restored and realised.

Kuala Lumpur and Riyadh have also condemned Israeli military aggression which has caused the loss of lives of many Palestinians and led to the derailment of the West Asian peace process.

These were contained in a joint communique issued today following the end of an eight-day visit to Malaysia by Saudi Arabian Second Deputy Prime Minister Prince Sultan Abdul Aziz Al-Saud.

The document was made available to the media by Wisma Putra.

"Saudi Arabia and Malaysia unequivocally condemn the flagrant Israeli aggression on Islamic sites under the protection of the Israeli forces which led to the massacre of many innocent Palestinian people.

"Both countries are deeply concerned with the grave situation that has befallen their Palestinian brothers that was caused by Israeli military aggression and which has derailed the peace process," the communique said.

It said the rights of the Palestinians included the establishment of their own independent state with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital and also the return of the occupied Syrian Golan to the borders of June 4, 1967.

Malaysia and Saudi Arabia also stressed the religious sensitivity and the significance of Al Quds Al Sharif to the whole Islamic world and called for unity among the ummah to make every effort to stop the aggression and sacrileges inflicted on Islamic holy places.

Hundreds of Palestinians have been killed in violence which erupted on Sept 28 following a controversial visit by an Israeli politician to a Jerusalem shrine holy to both Muslims and Jews.

Both countries also supported a recommendation of the Arab League Summit which met recently in Cairo that a war crime tribunal be set up by the United Nations to bring to justice those responsible for Palestinian deaths.

On a bilateral note, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia agreed to further enhance their existing close relations including by promoting cooperation in fields such as trade and economy, science and technology, defence, finance, religious affairs, tourism, culture, youth and sports.

"In particular, the two countries agree to work together to help improve the international regulatory system and the international financial order," the document said.

While in Malaysia, Prince Sultan met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Both countries also agreed to encourage closer interaction between the business community to benefit fully from trade and investment opportunities available in both countries.

"Malaysia reiterated its strong support for the membership of Saudi Arabia in the World Trade Organisation which would further strengthen the position of Islamic and developing countries," the communique said.

It said both sides were of the view that there should be regular exchange of visits and consultations between leaders and officials as well as increased people to people contact to enhance bilateral relations.

Saudi Arabia and Malaysia expressed their satisfaction that the visit had given an added impetus to strengthening further ties between the two Muslim countries.

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