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Mahathir-Palestine

MAHATHIR SAYS MUSLIM HONOUR ASSAULTED BY ISRAELI BRUTALITY

By: Muin Abdul Majid

DOHA (Qatar), Nov 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people is also an assault on Muslim honour and dignity.

He said although Muslim countries represented more than a third of the membership of the United Nations (UN), they could only watch helplessly as Israel continued with impunity and arrogance to kill innocent Palestinians.

Dr Mahathir said the fate of the Palestinians was inextricably linked to the Muslims as a whole and they were clearly living under occupation with their rights and freedom denied.

"The assaults on the Palestinians are assaults on the Muslims, their dignity and honour. Muslim countries cannot just watch Israelis killing Palestinians with impunity," he said on behalf of the Asian Group at the opening of the ninth summit of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), here.

Dr Mahathir said the current development in West Asia called for unity and solidarity within the ummah for what was happening to the Palestinians could also happen to others like in Yugoslavia and Chechnya.

The prime minister said the collective voice of the OIC should be heard loud and clear in support of the Palestinians and there were obviously things which could be done to make the objections of Muslim countries felt.

"We should remain steadfast in making no compromises on the status of Al Quds Al Sharif. We should continue to address the cause of ensuring the return of the rest of the Occupied Palestinian and Arab territories including the Syrian Golan," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Palestinian leadership too should be fully supported and assisted with whatever means possible.

Israel, which is not recognised by Malaysia, captured Al Quds Al Sharif or East Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War. But its sovereignty over the holy city has never been acknowledged by the international community.

During that war, Israel also gained control of the West Bank, the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip as well as the Golan Heights region of southwestern Syria.

The prime minister said it was time for the organisation to truly act as a like-minded people and that the bickering should stop to enable the Palestine issue to be approached with a collective heart and mind.

However, he said neither Israeli political, economic and military clout nor the United States biases towards Israel could be ignored or underestimated.

"It is important therefore that our ideals, zeal and enthusiasm be tempered with reality and pragmatism. But given our seriousness of purpose and dedication to a united cause, I am confident that we could move in the right direction to attain our desired objectives," he said.

Hundreds of people, mostly Arab Palestinians have died in violent clashes with Israeli forces sparked by a controversial visit by a Jewish politician to a holy site in Jerusalem.

Addressing a gathering of Muslim intellectuals and businessmen last night, Dr Mahathir lamented that Muslim countries were weak and none had any influence over world affairs.

He said the situation in Palestine was typical with children who threw stones were being shot dead with live bullets and there was nothing that one billion Muslims in the world could do.

"We can send appeals to stop the carnage but all that we get is to be told to stop the children from throwing stones. No one tells the Israelis to stop shooting. It is as if the most natural thing for people to do when stones are thrown at them is to shoot the stone throwers dead.

"And yet these people who tolerate the killing of stone-throwing children talk endlessly about human rights, about justice and the rule of law," said Dr Mahathir.

-- BERNAMA

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