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Iraq-Sharon

ELECTION OF SHARON MAKES NO DIFFERENCE, SAYS IRAQI FM

By: Haikal Mohamad Isa

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 8 (Bernama) -- Yesterday's election of hardliner Ariel Sharon as Israel's new Prime Minister over incumbent Ehud Barak will make no difference to the stalled Arab-Israeli peace process as both are "criminals", said Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf.

"Ariel Sharon, Ehud Barak, Shimon Peres and whoever, they are all the same, exactly the same. They all want to take the Palestinian land for the Israelis," he told Bernama in an interview yesterday at the end of his three-day official visit here.

"They (Israelis leaders) are all criminals and they are slaughtering the Palestinians and covering themselves by talking about peace. This (peace talk) is a joke," he said.

In order to achieve peace the Israelis must return all the land they took away from the Palestinians and reverse the immigration of Jews from all over the world to Palestine, he said.

"The (occupied) land should be returned back to the real owner, that is the Palestinians," said Mohammed Said.

During his visit here, his fourth to Malaysia since 1972, Mohammed Said met with counterpart Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and called on Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He left for Bangkok today.

The Israelis, he said, must reverse the policy of importing Jews from all over the world and place them in occupied land or the peace process would not have any possibility for a solution.

"So if we really talk about stability, peace and security in the region, one way is that the Palestinian land should be returned to the Palestinians, and Jews who came from United States, Eastern Europe, Ethiopia and the Arab world must emigrate back.

"Unless this is implemented then there is no peace," he said.

As for Jews born in Palestine before 1948, they could stay in Palestine and live together with the Palestinians, he said.

According to Mohammed Said, the current peace process was doomed to fail from the beginning as the much stronger Israel with the support of its chief ally, United States "is enforcing submission of the weak (Palestinian) and calling it a peace."

"A sharp tilt and imbalance of power does not induce peace. This is what history tells," he said adding that the peace process would be meaningful only when Arabs regained their strength.

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