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FUIW to hand PM memo on acts against Palestinian universities

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World will hand a memorandum to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tomorrow, regarding the savage aggression and criminal acts being committed against universities in Palestine.

FUIW secretary-general Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri said they vehemently condemn the outrageous aggression perpetrated by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian people and against its educational, cultural and scientific institutions, its economic and social structures and its national identity as a whole.

He added the aggressions perpetrated by the Israeli occupying forces against the Palestinian universities constitute a blatant violation of international law and international conventions and agreements.

"In my capacity as secretary-general of FUIW and director-general of Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, I express the solidarity of the Federation and ISESCO with the Palestinian people, the universities and all educational, cultural and scientific institutions in Palestine."

He said the 96 participants from the Muslim World at the second General Conference had also expressed their solidarity with their Palestinian brethren who were expecting the support and backing of all Muslims.

Asked whether Palestinian universities were members of FUIW, Abdulaziz said there were four, but only two attended the conference as the other two were not allowed to leave the country by the Israeli forces.

As for the Conference, he said, it went on smoothly with many of the items such as the new charter, rules and regulations, statutes, financial regulations and internal procedures for Executive Council and General Conference, tabled for the first time, being passed.

He said the General Conference also agreed to admitting 12 new universities to the Executive Council as members with three others - Al-Imam Mohamed Ibn Saud Islamic University, Saudi Arabia; Islamic Azad University, Iran and An-Najah National University, Palestine - being retained.

The new executive council member universities are Jamia Naleemiah, Sri Lanka; Mogadishu University, Somalia; Imam Aouzai College of Islamic Studies, Lebanon; Hadhramout University of Science and Technology, Yemen; University of Kuwait, Kuwait; Assiut University, Egypt; University of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdallah, Morocco; Shendi University, Sudan; State Institute of Islamic Studies, Indonesia; University of Brunei Darussalam, Brunei; Mehran University of Engineering and Technology, Pakistan and Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Abdulaziz said the next Executive Council meeting would be held in Dec 2003 at University of Sharjah in Saudi Arabia.

"I take this opportunity to thank Dr Mahathir and the Government of Malaysia for hosting the Executive Council meeting and General Conference.

"We also thank them for their warm hospitality and tremendous support in making the event a success," he said.

IIUM rector Professor Dr M. Kamal Hassan, who chaired the General Conference, said the first two days of the general conference went on smoothly and most of the items tabled were passed.

He said the new members to the Executive Council were selected on three criteria namely based on geographical representation, diligence in paying

of yearly fees and priority to seniority.

One of the observers to the General Conference, Abdalla M. Ali who is the Associate professor Dean of English Programmes (English division) in the Islamic American University, said he gained a lot of knowledge just by being an observer and has applied that his university be made a member of the Federation.

He said his one-year-old private university, which was funded by Muslim-American Society and mainly offers correspondence courses on Islamic studies, was seriously keen on educating Muslims - young and old - on the teachings of Islam, as many have little knowledge of the religion.

There are some eight million Muslims living in the United States.

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