

10 OCT 2001

OIC-Qatar

QATAR EMIR WANTS UN TO HOLD CONFERENCE ON TERRORISM

By: Ahmad Fuad Yahaya

DOHA, Oct 10 (Bernama) -- The Emir of Qatar Shaikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani said the United Nations should call for an international conference to draft an international convention on combating terrorism binding all countries.

He said the world body must carry out its full responsibility for the codification of the provisions of that convention, its implementation, putting it into effect, setting the penalties for violation of its provisions so that combating international terrorism was carried out under the UN umbrella and command in accordance with the criteria agreed upon.

Speaking at the opening of the special session of foreign ministers of the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) here today, Shaikh Hamad also stressed the need to clearly define terrorism and the its distinction, with the people's struggle against foreign occupation and their legitimate right to defend their freedom and self determination.

From this point, the Palestinian people in their struggle for liberation of their homeland are practicing a lawful right in resisting the occupation that has usurped the land, displaced its people and imposed a policy of starvation and siege and the assassination of leading political figures, in its continuing attempts to stifle the freedom of these people and suppress their independence, he said.

The Emir's view is in tandem with Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who has strongly called for a UN-sponsored international conference on terrorism to find solutions to the problem, in the wake of the Sept 11 tragedy in the United States.

Shaikh Hamad, who chaired the special session of the OIC today, also hoped that the recent events in the US would not distract the international community from giving attention to the problem in Palestine.

He said the international community should not permit the recent events in the US to distract it from its role, and blind it from shouldering its responsibility towards state terrorism practised by the Israeli regime against the Palestinian people.

Its grave escalation of the situation in the region and its attempt to exploit these events to create new situations in the region would threaten security and stability, he said.

The Emir said the atrocities perpetrated against the Palestinian people were nothing but organised terrorism practised by the Israeli regime against unarmed people who have no alternative other than resistance in defence of their rights, the protection of their holy places and standing up against the humiliation, oppression, killings and displacement inflicted upon them.

"I must state here that there are voices in our Islamic nation which spell out that state terrorism begets terrorist organizations, and that violence breeds violence," he said.

The only way to break this vicious circle is to grant the Palestinian people their right to self-determination and the establishment of their independent state on their national soil, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, he said.

Shaikh Hamad called on the international community, particularly the US and Russia, to shoulder their responsibilities and provide the required international protection for the Palestinian people in the face of the Israeli war machine as a preliminary step to resume the peace process on

its original bases in accordance with the resolutions of international legality and the principle of land for peace.

"I would like, on this occasion, to express satisfaction at the statements, in respect made by the US President George Bush when he spoke of establishing the Palestinian state as being part of the strategic American vision of settling the conflict in our region," he said.

On the military actions taken by the US and its allies against Afghanistan since Sunday in response to the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington last month, Shaikh Hamad stressed his unequivocal rejection of these acts but felt that countering them should not affect innocent civilians.

The military action should be exclusively confined to the perpetrators after the release of conclusive evidence, so that the international community could determine its position with discernment and substantiated evidence, he said

Shaikh Hamad also called for the OIC special session today to set up a fund to extend aid to the people of Afghanistan under the auspices of the OIC and pledged a contribution of US\$10 million from Qatar to the fund.

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