

14 DEC 2001

Mahathir-Palestine

UN MUST TAKE FIRM ACTION TO CURB AGGRESSION AGAINST PALESTINE, SAYS PM

PUTRAJAYA, Dec 14 (Bernama) -- Malaysia today called on the world's superpowers and the United Nations to take firm action to curb aggression against Palestine.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that without stern action, aggression and retaliation which had occurred in the West Bank would never end.

"We have written to governments of the Organisation of Islamic Countries and of Europe especially over the strikes against other Muslim countries besides Afghanistan.

"As regards to Palestine, we also stated that action must be taken, but response has been slow," he told reporters after recording his Aidilfitri message to be aired over RTM on Hari Raya eve, at his office here.

The Prime Minister said that the best solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would be to separate the Arabs from the Israelis there.

Dr Mahathir said that he had also proposed that a United Nations peacekeeping force be deployed in Palestine.

"If (Arabs and Israelis) are not separated, (Palestine) President Yasser Arafat cannot possibly put a stop to the aggressive actions of the Palestinians who have been extremely angered (over Israeli actions in bombing residential areas and other places).

"But the rash retaliatory actions by the Israelis were to the extent of attempting to kill President Arafat and the world remains silent as if the world allows such attempts planned by a certain regime," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that when the Israeli soldiers kill the Palestinians using sophisticated weapons, the world allows this but when the Palestinians react in revenge individually, without the permission of Arafat, it is regarded as terrorism and the leader is blamed for it.

Asked on Malaysia's proposal to host a conference on terrorism scheduled to be held next year, he said that Malaysia's preparedness was for the purpose of determining who are actually terrorists.

"If we were to say that only Muslims are terrorists, I feel it will be difficult for Islamic countries to participate in measures to merely hunt down the Muslim terrorists whereas we know that others are also terrorists...we should hunt down all terrorists irrespective of race, irrespective of religion," he said.

Asked to comment on the failure of the United States and the Northern Alliance to capture Osama bin Laden, said to be the prime suspect in the Sept 11 attacks on the United States, he said: "That is what we have envisaged will happen."

"Even though the Talibans have been crushed, strikes will still have to carry on. Strikes are not the way (to do it). A more thoroughly planned action to target the terrorists must be carried out, not launching bombs at random at the all places," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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