

# Jordan backs Saudi plan on normal ties with Israel

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JORDAN backs the Saudi proposal for "normal relations" with Israel and hopes to see Jerusalem become an open city.

Its Foreign Minister, Shaher Bak, said Jordan's stand on terrorism was parallel to Malaysia's stand.

Jordan had been working hard for the past two months to co-ordinate positions towards a consensus on the Saudi peace proposal, he told Bernama on the sidelines of the special session.

At last week's Arab summit in Beirut, Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah offered "normal relations" and security for Israel if it withdraws from Arab lands occupied in 1967 and allows refugees to return.

Shaher said this would include Israel withdrawing from occupied territory in Jerusalem but added that Jerusalem would not be divided into two cities, as it had been in the past.

"It will remain an open city, a city where the two sides can encounter. It is important for Muslims, Christians and Jews. It could be a centre of encounter for various

religions and civilisations instead of being a space for conflict," he said.

Shaher said all the three religions considered Jerusalem as their holy land. If one religion tried to impose its will or beliefs on the other two, they would not give in.

Jordan has been trying to encourage dialogue between civilisations and religions for the past two decades through its Royal Institute.

Shaher said Jordan agreed with Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's suggested definition of terrorism and his ideas for combating terrorism in his opening address to the special session.

He said Jordan and Malaysia were thinking along parallel lines.

He said it was important for Muslim countries and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) to take the lead in addressing terrorism.

Once the Muslim countries were united, they could present their stand to the United Nations for further action, he said.