

PAS hopes to get backing of Islamic nations

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Bid to co-ordinate aid to Palestinians

By FARID JAMALUDIN

KUALA LUMPUR: PAS will seek the advice of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) about setting up an international secretariat on Palestine.

Party president Datuk Fadzil Noor and other key officials have been talking to several leaders of Islamic countries about the matter, following a resolution at a recent seminar in Kota Baru.

"It has been agreed that there should be a concerted effort to resolve the Palestine issue but, at the moment, there is no unified platform towards that end," said Fadzil.

He said at the moment all aid and help to the Palestinians were done on an ad hoc basis.

"There is a dire need to establish one single body to harness and deploy all resources towards the Palestinians," he added.

The formation of the International Secretariat on Palestine was one of seven resolutions passed at the Inter-

national Seminar on Palestine, ahead of the three-day 48th PAS Muktamar last week.

Fadzil said PAS must not be seen as trying to take over other efforts by Umno and other groups.

"We will seek their co-operation on this matter and ask them to allow us to take the lead," he added.

The PAS central working committee would convene a meeting soon to appoint "people for the job."

"We are not looking at a big pool of workers because we also have to face the general election soon," said Fadzil.

"The Palestine issue is an important issue before every Muslim in the world. Somebody will have to take the initiative and PAS is ready for the job," he said.

Fadzil said the party had already sent out delegations to various Islamic organisations in Asean and other parts of Asia.

"It is a question of linking the network," he said.

He said the recent seminar

had provided the groundwork and direction for the secretariat.

Fadzil advised Umno to give its fullest co-operation to the PAS initiative rather than oppose its efforts, and also reminded it of their recent pact at a forum.

At that gathering Fadzil and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad led their respective parties to sign a common stand against Israeli aggression in the Middle East and to support the Palestinians in their more than 50 years of fighting to regain lost land from the Israelis.

"If we can come to an agreement at that talks, I do not see any reason for Umno to disrupt our plans," said Fadzil.

He said PAS had wanted to include Umno at its recent international seminar in Kota Baru but the invitation was turned down.

"But we believe Umno is serious about working with us in matters concerning Islam. I do not see any reason for it to act otherwise," he added.