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Terrorism-Iran

LEGALISE PALESTINIAN STRUGGLE- IRAN

By: David Chelliah

SEPANG, March 30 (Bernama) -- The Special Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers on Terrorism should look into the Palestine issue by legalising its struggle against Israeli aggression, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Dr Mohamad Zarif said today.

He said the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) needed to define terrorism and differentiate it from the struggle by the Palestinians as Israel had claimed that Palestinian President Yasser Arafat had been condoning terrorism.

Speaking on arrival at the KL International Airport (KLIA) here, Dr Mohamad said that the 57-member OIC should reach a consensus for a strong document on terrorism and at the same time must understand the Palestinian plight.

"The OIC should differentiate between terrorism and the struggle for self-determination and liberation against oppression," he said.

The Palestinians have maintained that their fight against Israeli occupation of their land was legitimate and in accordance with the United Nations' Charter.

Since the beginning of the Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation 18 months ago, at least 1,111 Palestinians and 383 Israelis have been killed.

In the latest development, Arafat was under siege in his presidential compound in Ramallah in the West Bank after Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared Arafat an enemy.

Dr Mohamad said the OIC had two meetings in Doha, Qatar after the Sept 11 terrorist attacks on the United States and the special session in Kuala Lumpur should allow the OIC to review its previous document on combating terrorism.

"Malaysia's initiative in organising this special session is very important and timely and it is extremely important for the OIC to review its document on combating terrorism," he said.

Dr Mohamad said the OIC must coordinate and seriously state its position on terrorism and the Palestinians struggle.

"We need a strong document on terrorism. The OIC needs to define what is terrorism and what is Palestine's struggle against Israel," he said.

The three-day special session will be opened on Monday by Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The special session is expected to come up with a declaration outlining, among others, the definition of terrorism, its root causes and measures to overcome it.

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