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Palestine-Jerusalem

M'SIA CAN LEAD MUSLIM WORLD IN DECLARING STANCE ON JERUSALEM

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 8 (Bernama) -- Malaysia, given its strong influence in Asia and in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), can take a leading role in representing the Muslim world to declare their stance to the Jerusalem dispute, Palestinian Minister for Jerusalem Dr Sari Nusseibeh said today.

"I believe Malaysia has a very important position because it is a Muslim country and given its prominent position in Asia and the OIC," he told reporters after calling on Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar at Wisma Putra.

Dr Nusseibeh said the move by the United States to sign the Bill declaring Jerusalem to replace Tel Aviv as Israel's new capital was a dangerous precedent.

"The fact that he (President George W. Bush) signed the Act is very dangerous and there should be strong opposition from the OIC on this," he said.

Dr Nusseibeh said it was the responsibility of the OIC to make its position known although the possibility of any action in the interests of Palestine might not materialise at all with the US strongly backing Israel.

"The OIC must make its position known, at least, because this is an unprecedented act by the US. So, the very fact that the OIC takes it seriously is in itself a good step. We have to work cumulatively in order to protect Jerusalem from any further deterioration in its legal status," he said.

Asked whether Palestine would ask the OIC to convene an emergency session, Dr Nusseibeh said the Palestinian administration had requested for one and it was up to the OIC whether to hold one or not.

Dr Nusseibeh is in Malaysia for a three-day working visit and is scheduled to call on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tomorrow.

In his meeting with Syed Hamid today, he briefed him on the latest developments in Jerusalem and also on the occupied territories of Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Syed Hamid reiterated Malaysia's long-standing position on Jerusalem whose present status quo must be maintained until a permanent peace solution was achieved between Palestine and Israel.

"We want the position of Jerusalem to remain status quo until the whole process has been resolved. This is also the stand of the international community. I think it will be a dangerous move to change that situation as it can further ignite the feelings and emotions of Muslims worldwide," he said.

Syed Hamid hosted a luncheon for Dr Nusseibeh also attended by members of the diplomatic corps from OIC-member countries in Kuala Lumpur to show their support for the Palestinian cause.

-- BERNAMA

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