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Syed Hamid-Terrorism

M'SIA HOPES TERRORISM ISSUES WILL BE DISCUSSED RATIONALLY

KUALA LUMPUR, March 31 (Bernama) -- Malaysia hopes that delegates to the Special Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers on Terrorism beginning here tomorrow will discuss related issues rationally and with a sense of responsibility.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said there was always the fear that this kind of conference would result in the emergence of confrontational views.

"We are not trying to find fault with anybody but we want to find solutions as to how to address the injustices, the oppression, the root causes (of terrorism) and come up with some plan of action that will enable us to do something together with other members of the international community," he said.

Syed Hamid said this at a press conference after opening the International Media Centre (IMC) here today to cater for local and international journalists covering the three-day event. The centre is managed by the Malaysian National News Agency (Bernama).

He said the meeting would provide the Islamic perspective with respect to the subject of terrorism, noting that it should not be at any time associated with any religion, race or culture.

The special session, to be opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, is expected to come up with a declaration outlining, among others, the definition, root causes and measures to overcome terrorism.

"We are very confident that based on current discussions that we have and the statements that we have prepared, that there will be a consensus," he said.

Following the Sept 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the image of Islam and Muslims in general have suffered with reports of mosques and Islamic centres in many parts of the world being vandalised while people professing the Islamic faith harassed.

Syed Hamid said: "It is timely post-Sept 11 that the Muslims' viewpoints are brought to the mainstream of the world viewpoint with respect to the subject of terrorism."

He reiterated that the special session should be a prelude to an international conference focusing on terrorism.

Queried on developments in Palestine, the minister said Malaysia considered acts of atrocities committed by Israel against the Palestinian people as state terrorism.

Syed Hamid said Kuala Lumpur's position was that Israel, must like any other country, be made to comply with United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions to enable peace to prevail in West Asia.

"Israel should not be made an exception to compliance, it has to respect the viewpoint of the international community in order to bring peace."

"That's why Malaysia has suggested that there should be an international force to separate the two parties before we even begin to negotiate or start discussions," he said.

Syed Hamid said it was important not to lump people fighting against injustice, oppression or against foreign occupation of their land together with terrorists.

In the latest development, Israeli forces besieging Palestinian

President Yasser Arafat's headquarters in Rammallah reportedly fired on his offices on Sunday.

Foreign reports said several of the Palestinian leader's guards sustained injuries including two who were in serious condition.

Syed Hamid added that both the UN and the United States should play a role in trying to bring about solutions to the quagmire in West Asia.

"The parties must accept that acts of terror have to stop and how do you go about it. Unless the UN is willing to come in and play a leading role, we are going to still have problems," he said.

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