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Mahathir-Reactions

MUSLIM WORLD APPLAUDS DR MAHATHIR FOR INSPIRING SPEECH ON TERRORISM

KUALA LUMPUR, April 1 (Bernama) -- Muslim leaders today stood united against global terrorism and praised Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for an inspiring and comprehensive antidote for terrorism.

Dr Mahathir's 45-minute opening speech at the special session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Minister on Terrorism here drew loud applause from representatives of 53 countries of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

Dr Mahathir also called on the Muslim countries to take a common stand on terrorism and action against the perpetrators through the United Nations.

He also touched on the various forms of terrorism and the definition and negative perception of terrorism associated with Islam and Muslims.

His overall views on terrorism and the Palestinian cause would likely set the tone of the three-day session against a backdrop of intensified Israeli military aggression on the Palestinians.

The delegates' reactions reflected their unanimous agreement that Dr Mahathir's thoughts be used as a guideline to look at terrorism in the broader and right perspective.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Farouk Kaddoumi, who is the most sought-after figure by journalists here, described Dr Mahathir's speech as inspiring.

"I think it was an inspiring speech for all members of this meeting to discuss the means and ways to combat terrorism and to define what terrorism is all about," he said at the Palace of Golden Horses Hotel, here, the venue of the meeting.

Asked whether the Arab world was behind the Palestinian cause, he said that all of them were united to defend the Palestinian cause for liberation against Israeli occupation.

Afghanistan's interim Foreign Minister, Dr Abdullah Abdullah, said Dr Mahathir's remarks were comprehensive and thoughtful in addressing the terrorism issue.

"I think it is a comprehensive speech, considering all aspects of the problem we face, and very much in line with what we (Afghanistan) think about it... that there should be a clear definition," he said.

Dr Abdullah said Dr Mahathir also touched on the need for global action to tackle terrorism, which has taken centre stage in world politics following the Sept 11 attacks on the United States.

Mali Foreign Minister Modibo Sidibe, who was equally impressed, described Dr Mahathir as knowledgeable and a dynamic leader who understands the global problem facing Muslims.

"It (speech) will be a guideline for us...I am sure at the end of the session everyone will learn from this speech and will come up with good resolutions," he said.

Another delegate, Dr Mangom Mukhtar Ceesay, the ambassador of Gambia to Saudi Arabia, described Dr Mahathir's speech as a masterpiece, praising the Malaysian leader for his far-sightedness on the issue.

Libyan Charge D'Affaires here Ali Alsheriyy said he was impressed when Dr Mahathir differentiated between state terrorism and the genuine efforts to struggle for and liberate an occupied land.

Cameroon Head of Delegation Adoum Gargoum, who is Minister Delegate in Charge of Relations with Islamic World Affairs, said Dr Mahathir was brave

enough to voice out on the subject, unlike many other Muslim leaders.

"His explanation about the fight for liberation should be taken into account. We cannot simply label people in such situation as terrorists," he said.

Oman Foreign Minister Yusof Alawi Abdullah expressed the hope that the speech would inspire others to start looking for ways to find peace.

Nigerian High Commissioner to Malaysia Ibrahim Yarima Abdullahi described Dr Mahathir's version of terrorism as hitting the nail on the head.

"His analysis is quite objective and very well put and I think if the world were to listen to him we'll have the chance of at least containing terrorism and live in peace," he added.

Comoros Foreign Minister Halidy Charif said: "A good speech which shows how the world is at the moment. I think the world will listen carefully to this important speech."

The special session ends on Wednesday.

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