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Dr M: Powerful nations doing whatever they like

PETALING JAYA, Sun. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, lamenting that there was no more justice in the world today, said some countries were free to do whatever they liked because they were powerful.

They continue to commit or condone injustices while preaching human rights, democracy and fair play, said the Prime Minister.

A case in point, he said, was Israel's siege of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's headquarters, which saw the United Nations passing a resolution that was ignored by the Zionist regime.

He said the UN passed the resolution because it was part of its function.

"A duty has to be done whether it is effective or not.

"But I do not think it will be effective, that's all."

He made the remarks at a Press conference at the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Subang upon his return from the Fourth Asia-Europe Meeting in Copenhagen.

The siege is now entering the 10th day with no end in sight.

Arafat telephoned Dr Mahathir for help from his compound in the West Bank last Sunday just before the Prime Minister flew to Copenhagen.

Dr Mahathir said he had written to United States President George W. Bush, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder and French President Jacques Chirac urging them to use their office to curb Israel's aggression.

He had also met Chirac at the ASEM.

"(But) I got the impression that in this world, there is no more justice. If we are not liked, a lot of things can be done against us. Whether it is fair or not, it is secondary.

"All this talk about justice, fair play, democracy and human rights is all lies and sheer nonsense."

Dr Mahathir said Arafat did not receive fair treatment because he was hated by certain people.

"At the moment, the world is not a very nice place. All this talk about democracy is merely propaganda ...there is no democracy even in democratic countries."

To a suggestion that the young would be disillusioned with his grim outlook of the world, the Prime Minister replied: "I do not like to lead them up the garden path. If we talk about democracy, Malaysia is more democratic than most other democratic countries."

On Canada requiring Malaysians to apply for visas, he described the move as "unfortunate".

"The Canadians have been friendly towards us. They know us but apparently we do not know the Canadians that well."

He said it was unfair to discriminate Malaysia just because it was an Islamic country.

On whether Malaysia regretted that its tough measures to combat terrorism had not been recognised and appreciated as reflected by the visa requirement, Dr Mahathir said: "We do things not for other people to appreciate (us). We do (them) because they are right."

On what Malaysia could do to counter religious profiling, he said: "What can we do? It is their business."

He said there was also no need for Malaysia to register a protest as it would not achieve anything.

Dr Mahathir said he could not agree with the reason given for the new

ruling that Malaysian passports were open to abuse.

"If the passports were being sold, it would have been sold a long time ago."

On a recent study by a international management consultant which showed Malaysia displaced from the list of top 25 destinations in country for foreign direct investment, Dr Mahathir said the drop was because there was generally not much foreign investment going around.

"That's why in the 2003 Budget, I stressed the need to generate the economy from within, which means using domestic sources, something that we have."