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Palestine wants KL to play lead role for Muslim world

PUTRAJAYA, Tues. - Palestine wants Malaysia to take the lead role in representing the Muslim world in the current dispute concerning the status of Jerusalem and the Palestinian cause in general, Palestine's Minister for Jerusalem Dr Sari Nusseibeh said today.

Dr Nusseibeh said Kuala Lumpur could play a significant role in the Palestinian cause due to its strong position in Asia and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC).

"We believe that Malaysia has a very important position, not only as a fellow Muslim nation but more so because of its prominence in Asia and the OIC," he told reporters after calling on Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar at his office in Wisma Putra.

"Malaysia can take a leading role in stating and declaring the Muslim world's position."

He said Palestine was pushing for an emergency session of the OIC to deliberate on the latest developments, especially the recent US move to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital and the continuous killing of Palestinians.

"We have to work together to protect Jerusalem from any further deterioration of its legal status. The OIC has a responsibility to make its position known."

He said US President George W. Bush's move to sign the Bill to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital was a dangerous precedent.

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

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.

At a separate Press conference after meeting Dr Nusseibeh, Syed Hamid said he was briefed on the latest developments in Jerusalem and the occupied territories of Gaza Strip and West Bank.

He said the status quo of Jerusalem must be maintained until a permanent peace solution was achieved between Palestine and Israel.