

19 APR 2002
Peacekeepers

UN MUST DECIDE ON PEACEKEEPING MISSION IN PALESTINE, SAYS NAJIB

PEKAN, April 19 (Bernama) -- The United Nations must make a decision soon on the peacekeeping mission in Palestine especially in Gaza and the West Bank, said Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said that for as long as the UN fail to intervene in the clashes between the Palestinians and the Israeli forces, there would never be peace between the two conflicting parties.

"As such, one measure to ensure peace and security in the affected area is for the UN to pass a resolution that peacekeeping forces be sent to Palestine," he told reporters after attending the Speech Day of Sekolah Menengah Sains Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah here yesterday.

Last Wednesday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that Malaysia was prepared to send its military personnel to Palestine in the event that the UN decides to dispatch peacekeeping forces to put an end to clashes between the Palestinians and the Israeli forces.

Najib said that Malaysia which had long been prepared to dispatch its military personnel to Palestine hoped that the matter would become reality as soon as possible as too many innocent people had become victims and were tyrannized.

The minister said that if a UN resolution is passed, a battalion of 1,500 from the various units would be dispatched as peacekeepers.

"That was the strength of our peacekeeping force dispatched to Bosnia and I believe it may be similarly suitable for duties in Palestine," he said.

Several flights would need to be arranged to dispatch the Malaysian military personnel there using the Royal Malaysian Air Force's Charlie aircraft or UN chartered aircraft, he said.

Asked to comment on the payment of allowance to ex-servicemen who served during the emergency, Najib said that his ministry would study the implications of such payment as there were many categories of ex-servicemen.

For instance, he said, there were ex-servicemen who served during the British administration and receiving pension payment and there were also those who were now active in the Territorial Army.

-- BERNAMA
ROS RM