

Journalists: Dr M's remarks misconstrued

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SEVERAL international journalists covering the OIC Summit in Putrajaya said they are not surprised that some reporters had distorted remarks made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad about Jews ruling the world by proxy.

Syrian TV journalist and broadcaster Hana Salleh said the Western media had used Dr Mahathir's speech to serve their own purpose.

"The whole speech was very good. Syrians admire Dr Mahathir for his speech, thoughts and personality.

"Israel has a dream to occupy as much land as possible and will not stop," she added.

Hana said Dr Mahathir had warned Muslims to be careful of Israel and the war against Islam.

A Kuwaiti reporter said the reports did not make any sense as the Prime Minister was talking about Zionist policies.

"There is a lack of understanding of Zionism and being anti-Semitic," he said.

"There was nothing out of the ordinary about Dr Mahathir's remarks. There is too much Islamophobia being created by some parties."

The reporter said some journalists covering the summit were not interested in major issues but were here only to look for the right moment to snap at Muslim leaders.

Qatar Television newsreader Talal H. Al-Sada said Dr Mahathir's speech had been misconstrued.

"He just touched a bit on Jewish history as an example, to draw a comparison with what is happening

in the Islamic world now."

Talal said Dr Mahathir had asked the Palestinians and Israelis to stop fighting and sit together to discuss problems peacefully.

United News of India editor Sheikh Manzoor said the criticisms of Dr Mahathir's speech were out of context and unwarranted.

"In this context, the reference to Jews was made in relation to civilisation conflicts. Dr Mahathir's speech, as a whole, was referring to the Muslim world.

"The entire message was telling Muslims not to fight to achieve a solution."

A Western journalist interviewed said Dr Mahathir's remarks would provide ammunition for those who wanted to "declare him irresponsible."

"And they will ignore some of his

more insightful remarks. Dr Mahathir has always been a powerful critic of globalisation, Western financial institutions and the political domains of the West."

Adding that racism, and particularly anti-Semitism, was a "major taboo" subject in the West, he said there was a failure to distinguish between Israel as a political entity and the Jews as a race.

An Asian journalist, in defence of his colleagues who had presented the Prime Minister as anti-Semitic, said they picked the newest and strongest point in Dr Mahathir's speech.

"He knew he was going to create a controversy by mentioning that the Jews rule the world and the Muslims must learn from them.

"But he still went into it although it would put him in a bad light."