

26 JAN 2003

Mahathir-Palestine

MALAYSIA TO BRING IN PALESTINIANS TO SHOW THEIR SUFFERINGS

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 26 (Bernama) -- An effort will be made to bring the Palestinians who are victims of Israeli atrocities to Malaysia to show their sufferings, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The prime minister said that this was to show the world the sufferings of the Palestinians who had been oppressed and tyrannised by Israel all this while.

"Some parties say that the Palestinian problem has nothing to do with the issue of terrorism but actually terrorism occurs because the Palestinians have not received any help in their efforts to win back their territory and homeland," he said.

He said this at a gathering organised by the Peoples's Alliance For Peace Malaysia at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) base in Subang, near here, upon his return from his visits to Lebanon, Egypt and Davos, Switzerland, where he attended the World Economic Forum (WEF).

Dr Mahathir was also declared a hero of world peace at today's gathering attended by about 2,000 people comprising members of political parties, youth organisations, non-governmental organisations and students.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir said that because the Palestinians continued to be tyrannised and denied their rights to set up their own nation, some of them had resorted to terrorism.

"That's why they act violently and if these causes of terrorism are not addressed and resolved, believe you me the terrorism will continue no matter what action is taken by other countries in the world," he said.

Over 2,000 Palestinians and 700 Israelis have been killed in disputes in the uprising since September 2000 following the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to a disputed area in east Jerusalem.

Dr Mahathir said the Palestinians were shot with bullets covered with chemicals, as a result of which some of the victims had contracted diseases.

"As peace lovers, we sympathise with the Palestinians," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that to resolve the problem of the Jews in their own country, the European powers helped set up an Israeli nation by taking Palestinian land after the Second World War.

He said the Palestinians had no big weapons such as helicopter bombers like the Israelis.

"They defended their homeland and when they had no choice, they resorted to other means. (But) Israel has a choice and need not use force, (by) withdrawing from the (occupied) territories and allowing the Palestinians to return to their country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said some big powers wanted President Yasser Arafat to stop leading Palestine and its people "but why doesn't Sharon also step down as Israeli prime minister for his terrorism which is even bigger."

-- BERNAMA

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