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Palestine-Visitors

PALESTINIANS SHARE EXPERIENCES WITH DR M

PUTRAJAYA, Feb 15 (Bernama) -- "Forgive me Sir if my English is not very good but I have to tell you about my life. I have had five of my classmates killed, we have no water and electricity. We have no proper education, we live in fear.

"Tell me what you want us to do. We need help. We need assistance. We need whatever you can give. We want to live peacefully."

These were the words of a Palestinian teenager, Jenin Mohamed Al-Bilani, to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad when the Prime Minister met 11 Palestinians in a dialogue session at his official residence in Seri Perdana here today.

The teary-eyed teenager, trying his best from bursting into tears, told Dr Mahathir this when the Prime Minister asked him for his story at the nearly two-hour dialogue, which was also attended by Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, the Prime Minister's wife.

The dialogue was held as part of Malaysia's peace initiative organised by the People's Alliance for Peace Malaysia (Peace Malaysia).

All the Palestinians, who were given an opportunity to express their feelings, paid tribute to Dr Mahathir for his untiring efforts in highlighting the Palestinian cause to the world.

They wanted Malaysia to play a more prominent role.

Safaa Al-Damshah, a Palestine teenage girl, who was among the 11 to meet Dr Mahathir, told the Prime Minister that with the unrest in Palestine, none of the school-going children could concentrate on their studies.

"They (Israelis) destroyed our houses, we are constantly harassed...even when we are studying, anything can happen. I am afraid inside my house as well as at school," she said.

An emotional Heba Sbaih, another teenage girl, told of her 16-year-old brother, whom she considers as a martyr after he was killed by Israeli forces outside their home.

"One day, I was coming back from school and reached the road where our house was but I could not locate my home. After a while, I realised that our house had been demolished...there were no traces of the house," she told the Prime Minister and his wife, who was visibly trying to control her grief.

A Christian priest, Constantin Basil Salameh, who was also part of the group, said the Israeli aggression did not stop at Muslims but also targeted Christians.

"We used to have 20 per cent Christians in Palestine but now we only accounted for three per cent of the population."

"I read today your (Dr Mahathir) statement and let me tell you that I am truly proud of you and the First Lady for the peace initiative Malaysia had undertaken," he said.

He said Muslims and Christians in Palestine are being suppressed, especially their land are being taken away for new settlements.

"My land was taken for new settlements. Now, I can go and see the land but I cannot use it. We need a miracle from God to save us but with the sympathy from people like you can help us," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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