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OIC-wrap-up

SYRIA DEMANDS CLEAR MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY FROM OIC

By: Shakir Husain

PUTRAJAYA, Oct 12 (Bernama) -- Discussions on Palestine and the recent Israeli attack on Syria will figure prominently in the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) ministerial meeting tomorrow as Syria has demanded a "clear message of solidarity" from the Islamic countries.

A senior Palestinian official said the Palestinians will stop their armed struggle against Israel only when the occupation of their territories ends.

As foreign ministers arrived today for their two-day meeting, the momentum for the full summit of the OIC heads of state and government on Thursday and Friday moved into high gear.

A Syrian Foreign Ministry spokesman told Bernama that Syria would ask for a "very clear condemnation" of Israel from the OIC members over the Jewish state's recent air attack on Syrian territory.

International Organisations Department director Bashar Jafary said Syria would ask for a resolution on the issue as a clear message of solidarity from the 57-member organisation.

"The UN Security Council and the international community should stop these types of Israeli aggressive actions," he said.

Jafary said the Israeli attack violated the Geneva agreement of 1974 on the disengagement of Syrian and Israeli forces in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

Syria, he said, would take self-defence measures if the international community failed to condemn Israel.

"We have the right to defend ourselves. The political leadership will consider what steps to take in light of the response of the UN Security Council, OIC and the international community," he said.

The Israeli violence in Palestine also remains high on the agenda of the 10th OIC Summit at the Putrajaya Convention Centre (PCC), a new landmark in this Malaysian federal administrative capital.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Political Bureau chief Farouq al-Kaddoumi said that "pursuing the armed struggle is the only solution in sight to end the Israeli occupation".

Kaddoumi, the highest ranking Palestinian official attending the summit, said: "The fighters are determined to liberate the occupied territories to establish a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as capital".

Palestine has urged the OIC member countries to take "practical measures" against the Tel Aviv regime rather than remain content with the words of condemnation.

Kaddoumi said Malaysia's taking over of the OIC chairmanship augured well for the Palestinians as the country had been a strong supporter of the Palestinian struggle.

He said President Yasser Arafat, who is unable to attend the summit, had conveyed his greetings to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and other OIC leaders.

Thirty-five heads of state and government are expected to attend the summit.

Bosnian President Sulejman Tihic flew in this morning for the meeting.

Others who arrived today were Comoros Foreign Minister Souef Mohamed El Amine, Maldives Foreign Minister Fathulla Jameel, Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Ahmed Kasauri, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa, Djibouti Foreign Minister Ali Yossoup, Tajikistan Foreign Minister Nazarod Talbak,

Mauritania Deputy Foreign Minister Abdel-Kader-Ould Mohamed and representative of the Iraqi Governing Council Hoshiar Zibari.

Bangladesh Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan, Sudan's Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail and Kazakhstan's Head of Delegation Kassymzhomart Tokaev.

Philippine Foreign Secretary Blas F.Ople, attending the summit as a guest, also arrived today.

Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal is scheduled to arrive at the KL International Airport in Sepang at about 11pm.

A delegation from the OIC Secretariat in Jeddah has also arrived.

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