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Najib-Israel

ISRAEL ARROGANT IN BANNING DR MAHATHIR FROM ENTERING JERUSALEM, SAYS
NAJIB

KUALA LUMPUR, May 17 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today hit out at the Israeli government for banning former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad from entering Jerusalem during his visit to the West Bank.

Describing the action as arrogant, the deputy prime minister said: "Jerusalem is not theirs (Israel's)...it is an open town that anyone can visit."

Dr Mahathir had no intention other than to understand the real situation and see the situation in the West Bank for himself during the visit, Najib, who is also Defence Minister, told reporters after presenting excellent service awards to his ministry staff here.

"Dr Mahathir indirectly wants to help find a political solution in keeping with the decision of the world to set up peace in Palestine," he said.

Foreign wire reports quoted Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia as saying that Dr Mahathir was delayed for an hour at the Allenby crossing from Jordan into the West Bank where Israeli officials banned him from going to Jerusalem.

The Israeli authorities which control the entrance into towns in the West Bank as well as the border into Jordan were reported to have said that they did not receive notice of Dr Mahathir's arrival.

Malaysia does not have diplomatic ties with Israel.

The Jenin town council was reported to have said that Dr Mahathir was invited to visit the town to tour the destruction caused during the five years of the Palestinian uprising.

Dr Mahathir was also invited to lead an international campaign to rebuild the town, it added.

Asked whether Malaysia would allow its people to visit Israel, Najib said: "It's not timely."

-- BERNAMA

HM MFJ JK