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Mahathir-Israel

ISRAEL DENIED ME ENTRY TO HIDE ATROCITIES ON PALESTINIANS - DR M

MELAKA, May 23 (Bernama) -- Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Israel deliberately stopped him from entering Jerusalem and Jenin on the West Bank of Gaza to hide their atrocities on Palestinians.

The former prime minister said his plans to visit Jerusalem and Jenin did not materialise because Israel controlled the entire Palestine.

"Jenin is a place where the Israelis caused massive destruction and killed many Palestinians. That's why they prevented me from going there," he told reporters after delivering a keynote address at an international conference on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Management.

Dr Mahathir, a vocal advocate of an independent and sovereign Palestine State, was asked to comment on the Israelis denying him entry into Jerusalem during his visit to the troubled West Bank on May 16.

He was delayed several hours at the Allenby Crossing from Jordan into the West Bank.

The Israeli authorities, who manned the entry and exit points in the West Bank, claimed they were not informed in advance of Dr Mahathir's visit.

Dr Mahathir said the claim was a lie as they were notified two weeks ahead of his visit.

He said Israel purposely delayed him from crossing the border by taking a long time to process his travel documents.

"When I arrived there, they took more than two hours, comparing my photographs and resorting to all sorts of delay tactics to prevent me from entering so that I will not be able to return from Jenin by 6pm (local time) when the border is closed," he said.

He said when he changed his plans to go to Jerusalem instead, he suddenly received a call, saying that he could not proceed purportedly due to security concerns.

"By then, it was too late and there was nothing much we can do," said Dr Mahathir who only managed to make a stopover in Ramallah.

He said his initial plan was to visit Jerusalem and Jenin, pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque and view the golden dome.

"I managed to see the dome from a hilltop house at a distance but did not get to pray at the mosque," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Israelis were indeed cruel as they have segregated Palestinian families by erecting a concrete security wall through their villages and seized their land.

"They are an arrogant lot, they build a 30-feet (9.12m) wall not to separate Israel from Palestine...but Palestinian families, making them travel long distances through checkpoints when they wanted to meet relatives in the same village," he added.

-- BERNAMA

BD RHM HA TOM