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Palestine wants NAM nations to suspend ties with Israel

By Balan Moses

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Palestine hopes the ministerial committee of the Non-Aligned Movement meeting here on May 13 will discuss the possibility of members suspending political ties with Israel.

Its Ambassador to Malaysia, Ahmad Al Farra, said Palestinian Foreign Minister Farouk Kaddoumi will also call for the 118 members of the movement to suspend trade ties with Israel.

He hoped the 57-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference will emulate the NAM initiative in these areas.

"Although NAM and OIC have given tremendous support to the Palestinian cause, they do not have the power to implement practical measures to take their stand a step further," he said.

Al Farra said several resolutions and communiques had been issued but few had been enforced.

It was in this respect that more concrete action should be pursued by NAM and OIC member states in furthering the Palestinian cause.

"I do not expect to see any lesser decision taken by the NAM ministers than what the OIC has taken. It is not enough to be angry or to condemn the Israelis."

He said Malaysia had taken steps under its chairmanship to give the two organisations a new lease of life with more action-oriented strategies.

"Malaysia is fulfilling its promises by calling for positive action to further the Palestinian cause," he said, adding that OIC's recent decision here to meet the international Quartet of nations was one.

The meetings will focus on the need to stick to the internationally-accepted road map for peace in the Middle East.

Al Farra said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar would be leading a five-member OIC group to meet United Nations, United States, European Union and Russian leaders.

On whether it was practical for NAM and OIC members to initiate a trade boycott of Israel in view of the US patronage of the nation, he said there would definitely be strength in unity.

"Besides this, we want the UN to initiate economic sanctions against Israel. We also want non-governmental organisations to institute measures to help us in our cause," he said.

On recent comments that Palestine may have lost the propaganda war against Israel, he said the Zionist propaganda machinery was immense and very powerful.

"It has even extended to the International Court of Justice in The Hague where they hold placards of Israelis killed in encounters with Palestinians. We need to strengthen efforts to tell our story."

Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad was reported in a local Bahasa Malaysia daily as saying that Muslim countries should be united on the economic front to fight the arrogance of the US.

Dr Mahathir said this was the only option available as military might was not practical.

International Movement of a Just World president Dr Chandra Muzaffar had also urged the Arab League to recall their envoys from Washington as a way of registering a diplomatic protest against US injustices in the Middle East.

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