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Implement resolutions immediately

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THE OIC should be serious when implementing resolutions mooted at summits for the advancement of the ummah, said Iranian ambassador to Malaysia Mohammad Ghasem Mohed Ali.

He said many resolutions that were discussed and agreed upon during previous summits were all forgotten and became a thing of the past once the head of states and delegates returned to their countries.

"OIC is a diverse organisation with 57 Muslim countries coming in with various interest to help the ummah. However, it is sad to know that it lacks co-ordination," he said in an interview recently.

He said many resolutions that were drafted 20 to 30 years ago were still "sitting on the table" without having any actions being taken to realise the resolutions in the interest of the Muslims.

He said this was worrying as the OIC was an international organisation which represented the voice of Muslims worldwide.

He said that efforts should be intensified to step up the efficiency of the organisation to address pressing issues, in particular, terrorism.

He said it was the "lackadaisical attitude" of the leaders governing the organisation in previous years as the reason why most resolutions were not implemented forcefully throughout the years.

"We hope the 10th OIC Summit will come up with new resolutions for implementation as soon as possible to help overcome challenges facing the ummah," he said.

He said Muslims were either attacked, discriminated or branded as terrorist ever since the Sept 11, 2001 attacks in the United States.

"This made life difficult for most Muslims as they were deprived and not given opportunities to voice out their opinions due to the tarnished image of Muslims."

He said the people suffered greatly from the wrongdoings of a small group of extremist who engaged terrorism based on deviationist teachings for their own agendas.

The 49-year-old diplomat said terrorist and terrorism were present everywhere and in other religions as well.

"It has nothing to do with religion. However, some irresponsible parties used Islam as a tool to spread their ideology, which is wrong as Islam is a religion of peace," he said, adding that it was the duty of Muslims to correct this misperception.

On the resolution to be proposed by Iran during the meeting, he said: "Iranian President Mohammad Khatami may likely propose a solution to solve the Palestine issue once and for all."

Asked about the expertise that Malaysia could offer at the OIC summit, he said: "Malaysia has been doing well in recent years and has a good relationship with many Muslim nations.

"In our opinion the main focus that OIC has on Malaysia is to learn its great achievements in economic development because many Muslim countries are developing nations."

Other than the economic agenda, he said, the political agenda faced by Muslims worldwide was also expected to be discussed at great length by the leaders, he said.

"Muslim leaders of today face great challenges to uphold the ummah and OIC can create a room for Muslim leaders to gather and state their views on ways to increase and improve bilateral trades among Muslim nations.

"Trade among Muslim countries is less than five per cent and we need to increase this percentage. Besides, tourism promotions involving member countries should also be increased," he said, adding that Muslim nations should help each other to boost economy growth.

Asked about Malaysia playing host of the OIC summit for the first time, Mohammad Ghasem, who would end his stint here next year, said:

"Iran is confident that Malaysia will be a good host despite the leadership reins of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad being passed on to his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi soon after the summit."

The Teheran-born ambassador previously served as an advisor to the Iranian vice minister of Foreign Affairs, ambassador to Greece and also Foreign Affairs Ministry director-general for West Asia.