

## **Palestinian cause: 'M'sia just wants to defend Muslims, not to be a hero'**

**Malaysiakini**

**21 October 2023**

**Bernama**

Malaysia's determination to fight for the cause of the Palestinians, who continue to be oppressed by Israel, is not because it wants to be a 'hero' but rather on the basis of its responsibility to defend Muslims.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said this struggle must be pursued because the people of Gaza have been oppressed for almost seven decades.

"The Muslim ummah is challenged and tested...hence, we must show our firmness," he said in a meet and greet session with the Malaysian diaspora in Saudi Arabia yesterday evening.

Some 300 Malaysians living and studying in Saudi Arabia attended the event organised by the Malaysian Embassy.

Malaysian ambassador to Saudi Arabia Wan Zaidi Wan Abdullah, accompanied by Foreign Minister Zambry Abd Kadir, Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz and Deputy Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Khairul

Firdaus Akbar Khan were present to welcome Anwar's arrival.

Anwar is on a two-day working visit to attend the inaugural Asean-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit, which concluded earlier yesterday.

### **'Not turn a blind eye'**

During the event, the prime minister also shared his address at the Asean-GCC summit, where he urged the world to collectively take action and 'not turn a blind eye' to the atrocities committed by Israel against the Palestinians.

"In my speech at the summit, I expressed my appreciation to Crown Prince Mohammed Salman for Saudi Arabia's initiative, along with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and other Islamic countries in stating their positions on this conflict.

"...there is a clear stance...yes, the issue of Gaza, Palestine, has not been resolved, but this is a humanitarian matter. It is a matter of justice.

"This is not a matter of ethnicity, religion or the Arab world. It is a Palestinian issue... an issue of seizing the rights of the people, their land, their property, and even their dignity," Anwar said.

The prime minister said that when the Palestinian-Israeli conflict flared up again recently, the whole world became angry about the violence that was taking place.

"When in fact, atrocities (against Palestinians) are committed every day...grabbing of land, killing of children, women, (the) humiliation has gone on for decades.

"Where is the humanity? This is why we need to speak out," said Anwar, while hoping that the small step taken by Malaysia to help the Palestinians would encourage other countries to follow suit.

### **Turkiye and Egypt**

According to Anwar, after his audience with the crown prince today, he will leave for Istanbul to meet Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to further discuss the issue on Palestine and Gaza before heading to Cairo to meet Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.

"The meeting with El-Sisi is to discuss the opening of the Rafah pass to facilitate the distribution of food, drink and medical aid to Palestine," he said.

At the gathering, Anwar, who is also finance minister, said the government prioritised political stability, economic growth, bringing in foreign investment

and uplifting the status and well-being of the people.

On poverty eradication, he said the policies implemented by the government were showing promising results, with the government's efforts to eradicate hardcore poverty successfully reducing the number to approximately 14,000 people compared to 120,000 in early 2022.

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Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/683631>