

PM saddened by backlash against flying in injured Palestinians

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Bernama

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim expressed sadness over backlash from some parties against the government's move to bring injured Palestinians from Gaza to receive medical treatment in Malaysia.

He said some even went to extremes in criticising the noble effort when it was indeed just a small act of compassion and kindness towards Palestinians who have been suffering and enduring Israel's genocidal acts in Gaza.

Anwar was disappointed that some even told him to become the prime minister of Palestine.

"Israel shoots, bombs, destroys houses, kills babies and women. Many Palestinians were injured, men were jailed, women were raped.

"And when we brought those injured here (for medical treatment), some people started to criticise, saying I shouldn't be the prime minister of Malaysia, telling me to go be the prime minister of Palestine if I really wanted to help."

He said this when officiating the closing of the Southern Zone Madani Rakyat programme at Dataran UTM, Skudai, today.

Anwar said this was not the first time the Malaysian government decided to help people from other conflict-stricken countries.

“There were many others who came before them (the Palestinians), hundreds of thousands of Rohingya and Achehnese refugees had also come here... we gave them protection until the tension in their countries subsided,” he said.

The prime minister said he also found it absurd that some civil servants fell for the criticisms, rather than being proud and congratulating the government and the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) for the effort.

“I hope they can open their mind a little bit because we are the first country in Asia that brings in the injured Palestinians for treatment. How is this possible? Because our cabinet, our leaders in the unity government agreed to take the common responsibility to do this,” he said.

127 Palestinians arrive

Yesterday, two RMAF Airbus A-400M aircraft carrying 41 injured Palestinians and 86 family members landed at the Subang Air Base in Selangor at around

2pm, after taking off from Al Maza Air Force Base in Cairo, Egypt on Thursday night.

The injured will be treated at the Tuanku Mizan Armed Forces Hospital in Kuala Lumpur and their uninjured relatives will be housed in a transit location provided by the Defence Ministry.

On the criticism of the government's move to use RMAF aircraft in the operation instead of commercial flights, Anwar said the decision was made in light of security risks, especially involving areas on the Egyptian border.

"We took them (Palestinians) at the (Egyptian) border, so we had to negotiate with the Egyptian government. The condition was that we must use military aircraft and have proper equipment.

"The aircraft might get shot by an Israeli missile, everyone on the plane knows that risk," he said.

Anwar said it was possible to bring the Palestinians here because of the close relationship between Malaysia and Egypt, as well as several other Middle Eastern countries.

"I called the president of Egypt, asking for their cooperation because we can't

bring them here if there is no cooperation with Egypt. So, it is good that we have good relations with Qatar, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Iran because that made it possible for us to carry out this mission,” he said.

At the same time, the prime minister also reminded all Malaysians to always be grateful for peace.

“This is the least we can do. Let’s be grateful to Allah that we still have a sense of kindness, compassion, and ability to help lighten the burden of others.

“We are just helping 40 or 50 injured Palestinians... what is this compared to the 40,000 others who have been violently killed by Israel in Gaza?” he added.

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