

Flotilla attack: Don't just condemn, says Dr M
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More could be done by the world's nations, including Malaysia, to help activists detained from the Mavi Marmara ship than to just condemn the brutal aggression by the Israeli regime on the flotilla bringing humanitarian aid to the people of Gaza, said former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

NONE "I think something more is needed than just condemnation by the governments of the world. You can condemn...but the Israelis just don't care," he said at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur on the upcoming "Structural Transformation of the Malaysian Economy" roundtable and public dialogue organised by the Perdana Leadership Foundation and the New Club of Paris.

Referring to the Israeli attackers as "a bunch of rogues with no human feelings", the Perdana Global Peace Organisation (PGPO) chairman said Malaysia and the world could urge the United Nations Security Council to act against the Israeli regime over the attack.

"I think the world should also prevail upon the United States to support Israel only when it is doing something right and not when Israel commits a crime ...you support them just because they are your ally," he said.

Malaysia had yesterday urged the United Nations Security Council to censure the Israeli regime over the attack.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had said that Malaysia would propose the matter be deliberated on by the Security Council soonest possible.

Dr Mahathir said Najib was not too late in making the response to the raid as claimed by certain quarters. "No, he was not late. I heard the news in the afternoon. He made the comment last night. Maybe he had to find the occasion," he said, stressing that he was not trying to defend Najib.

AS today rapped Najib for his delayed reaction to the Israeli raid on the Gaza-bound flotilla.

Twelve Malaysians were on board the Mavi Marmara, including a reporter and a cameraman from Astro Awani.

Not going bankrupt

On another issue, Dr Mahathir ruled out the possibility of the country going bankrupt if it continues to give subsidies to the people.

"In order to convey the message, Idris had exaggerated things...we are not going to be bankrupt but we are going to be poor," he said.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Idris Jala, who is also the CEO of the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) of the PM's Department, said the nation could go bankrupt by 2019 with debts totalling RM1.158 trillion if the country's deficit keeps on rising.

Malaysia's deficit rose to a record high of RM74 billion last year. With regard to subsidies, Dr

Mahathir urged the government to consider subsidies provided to the foreign industries.

"A lot of money goes to subsidising foreign industries in this country. They get cheap electricity, cheap fuel and on top of that they get tax exemption for 10 years. We are subsidising them but we get nothing," he said.

However, the subsidy rationalisation must not be sudden, but must be done gradually, he added.

- Bernama

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