

Take regional stance against Israel, Anwar tells gov't
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Fauwaz Abdul Aziz | Jan 12,

Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim urged the government to work together with its neighbours Indonesia and Brunei in taking "pro-active" measures in addressing the Israeli-Palestinian issue instead of waiting for the Arab governments and others to act.

This would serve to influence not just the Muslim and non-Muslim countries into doing more for Palestinians but may also affect changes to Israeli policy by pressuring the US to change its unflinching support for the Israeli government's actions in Palestine, he added.

"I don't believe Israel would be able to commit its uncouth and violence (against the Palestinians) without the US' direct support," he told a press conference at Parliament lobby, noting the billions of dollars in military assistance extended by the US towards Israel.

Earlier in the House, Anwar said the US can play a vital role in solving the conflict and that the lack of political will by its president, George W Bush, to solve the conflict should be condemned.

"And I hope that this House can deliver a clear message and urge it (the US) to review its military and its financial aid to Israel," he said.

The Permatang Pauh MP also expressed hope that the newly-elected president Barack Obama who is scheduled to take over the White House in eight days have "enough resolve to provide a solution to the conflict in Palestine".

Obama who was criticised heavily for his long silence on the Israeli bloody offensive vowed to take action on his first day as president.

On other matters, Anwar also told the press conference of the need for Pakatan Rakyat to work hard to secure a victory the Kuala Terengganu by-election given the preponderance enjoyed by the Barisan Nasional government in terms of media control and the funds that it controls.

"We have to work as hard as possible (in Kuala Terengganu) because we are facing a slanted media and hundreds of millions of ringgit," he said.

He also said the Malay electorate in Kuala Terengganu still make up the crucial bloc if the opposition coalition wished to win the constituency.

No comments on Ezam's claims

Asked about allegations by former PKR youth chief Ezam Mohd Noor that he had asked the latter to meet with former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamed in 1998 in order to allow for his return, Anwar refused to even give any recognition to his former confidante.

The allegation involved a matter that is more than ten years old and has no bearing on present concerns, said Anwar.

"I have never responded to Ezam, and I will not give him any further recognition," he said.

Ezam was today reported to have claimed that his former boss Anwar had sent him to see then-prime minister Mahathir on a "peace mission".

"He asked me to see Dr Mahathir because he wanted to come back to Umno's fold. I carried documented proof that the request for peace was from Anwar when I met Dr Mahathir.

"Now, I dare Anwar to deny that he wanted to reconcile with Dr Mahathir and Umno after he was sacked," Ezam was quoted as saying in Kolam Air, Terengganu.

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