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Malaysia will always support Palestinian cause, says Najib

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia remains steadfast in its support for the Palestinian cause, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The Prime Minister said that despite a recent statement by Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim supporting Israel's national security concerns, the

Palestinian government was aware that Malaysia's stance on Palestinian issues had always been consistent.

"As far as Hamas and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) are concerned, they know this is not our stance. They know our position. They know the Malaysian Government is very supportive of the Palestinian cause.

"We have always been very

strong (in supporting the cause) in the past and will continue to be strong and consistent in our position," Najib told reporters here yesterday.

The Palestinian government was reported to have been shocked and disappointed over Anwar's statement on Israel and this was conveyed by its prime minister Ismail Haniyeh to al-Quds Malaysia Foundation management board

chairman Nasharudin Mat Isa during the latter's recent visit to Kuwait.

Anwar had reportedly said in an interview with the *Wall Street Journal (WSJ)* that he supported "all efforts to protect the security of the state of Israel".

Nasharudin had said Hamas officials expressed the same sentiment and had asked him why Anwar made the statement, which contra-

vened a 1988 *fatwa* issued by 66 *muftis* that any action that gave recognition to Israel's existence opposed Islam.

Najib said the disappointment expressed by the Palestinian prime minister over the issue "spoke for itself", adding that even PAS had given Anwar the ultimatum to retract his statement in support of Israel or take legal action against WSJ if the report was wrong.