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PRIME NEWS

'We can help Palestine'

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Palestinians the experience it had facilitating peace talks in the southern Philippines.

"Should it be needed, we stand ready to offer you the benefit of that experience."

"Malaysia, always a friend of the Palestine people, is willing to help facilitate the reconciliation plan in whichever way we can," he said after being conferred with an honorary doctorate degree from Al-Aqsa University (Gaza).

"We believe in the rights of all people to live in peace, security and dignity, and we hope that the rights are realised for the people of the Palestinian soon."

Najib said Malaysia had stood firmly with the Palestinians in their struggle towards a just resolution to the Palestine-Israel issues.

He added that Malaysia wished to see an independent and unified Palestine enjoying the peace and security that everybody deserved.

The reconciliation plan, sponsored by Egypt, seeks to end the division between the two Palestinian movements that began in 2007, with Hamas taking over the Gaza Strip and Fatah the West Bank.

It provides for the formation of a national unity government between the two factions.

Fatah and Hamas plan to implement the plan, which they had signed in Cairo on May 4, 2011, between now and Jan 30.

Najib said Malaysia stood ready to offer the Palestinians the benefit of its experience in facilitating peace talks in the Philippines, which culminated in the signing of a framework peace agreement signed in Manila in October.

The agreement on the Bangsamoro between the Philippines government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front signalled an end to 40 years of civil war that had taken 120,000 lives and displaced millions more.

Najib offered scholarships and placements to qualified Palestinian students intending to study in Malaysia, both at the first-degree and postgraduate levels.

"It is our hope that such an arrangement will assist you in the reconstruction and development of your country."

Najib, who was accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Foreign Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom, arrived at the Rafah crossing at 10.40 am (4.40pm Malaysian time).

He was received by Haniyeh. Later, *Negeri* and the Palestinian national anthem were played. He inspected a guard of honour mounted by the Palestinian police force.

Najib and his entourage had earlier travelled 55km by road from the El-Arish airport in Egypt to the Rafah crossing.

After the welcoming ceremony, Najib laid the foundation stone of the new Hamas Prime Minister's office. The old office was destroyed in an Israeli bombing last November.

He also visited the site of the Malaysian-funded school in Gaza, Al-Madrasah Al-Malaziyah.

Later, he met Haniyeh's cabinet members and members of parliament.

Rosmah had a separate programme that included a visit to Nasser Hospital for Children, where she placed the foundation stone of

Malaysian offer to facilitate reconciliation effort between Hamas and Fatah



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Mohd Najib Tun Razak @NajibRazak
Alhamdulillah, urusan di Gaza berjalan dengan selamat dan jayanya. pic.twitter.com/DGNgp8l
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Mohd Najib Tun Razak @NajibRazak
Sy th lawat Gaza&disambut PM Ismail Haniyeh.Sempat jg kunjungan tapak projek sekolah Msia.Hrp lawatan ini dpt eratkan silaturahmi 2 negara
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the hospital's trauma centre.

Najib and his entourage left for Cairo later yesterday to pay a courtesy call on Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi.

Najib's visit is the second by a head of government or state after Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, who entered Gaza, also from the Rafah crossing, last October.

During last November's eight-day war between Hamas and Israel, a delegation of Arab foreign ministers, along with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davatoglu, had visited the small coastal territory on a solidarity mission.

The visits were made possible in part by Egypt's decision to loosen

some of the restrictions on travel through its Rafah crossing.

Page 1 pic: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak hugging the son of Ahmed Al-Jaabari, a Hamas military commander who was killed in an Israeli airstrike, in Gaza City yesterday. On his right is Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh. Reuters pic

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Palestinian loss of land — 1946 to 2000



Pre-1948, Palestine had land area of about 27,000 sq km. Now, having a population of about five million, the Palestinians are squeezed into two small land areas of 364 sq km (Gaza) and 5,860 sq km (West Bank). The two areas are separated by the territories occupied by the Zionist regime known as Israel.

INFOGRAPHIC: NST