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# Offer to unite Palestinian rivals

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**Friend in need:** Najib and Rosmah accompanied by Haniyeh (left) being introduced to Hamas Cabinet ministers in Gaza. — Bernama



## Malaysia supports Fatah-Hamas reconciliation

**GAZA CITY:** Malaysia has offered to help unite rival Palestinian groups Fatah and Hamas.

The first Malaysian Prime Minister to visit Palestine, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak expressed support for a reconciliation plan to end the division between the two Palestinian movements.

"A unity government is within reach," the Prime Minister said after being conferred a honorary doctorate by the al-Aqsa University in East Jerusalem yesterday.

He said that peace and prosperity could only be achieved through unity, a belief strengthened by Malaysia's success in facilitating talks in the southern Philippine to end four decades of conflict that had killed over 120,000 people.

"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.

A split between the two groups in 2007 led to the West Bank being governed by Fatah and the Gaza Strip by Hamas. The two sides signed a reconciliation plan sponsored by Egypt in May last year.

Najib, who was in Gaza on a humanitarian visit, said his commitment to a peaceful resolution to the

Palestinian issue was clear.

"We wish to see an independent, unified Palestine, enjoying the peace and security which all the world's peoples deserve."

While describing himself as a friend of the Palestinians, he paid tribute to Malaysians for commitment to their cause.

"It is my people who reach out with offers of assistance, who give what they can to help the people here, who keep Palestinian innocents in their thoughts whenever there is violence here," Najib said.

He said this commitment could be seen in the funds and medical supplies donated to a Malaysian solidarity charity mission and those who travelled to Palestine to disburse them.

Earlier, after crossing the Egyptian

### PM Najib's journey to Gaza

#### Gaza Strip

- > Coastal strip of land on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.
- > Borders Egypt on the southwest and Israel on the east and north.
- > 1.7mil population, predominantly Sunni Muslim.
- > Governed by militant group Hamas, and forms part of the Palestinian territories.



#### Gaza-Israel conflict

- Embroiled in decades-long dispute over the territory.
- Israel exclusively controls Gaza's airspace and tightly controls most of its land and sea borders.
- According to the Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, Israel remains an occupying power under international law, while Gaza is regarded by the United Nations as part of the "Occupied Palestinian Territories".
- On Nov 21, 2012, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohamed Kamel Amr jointly announced a ceasefire in Gaza after a week of bloodshed caused the deaths of 162 Palestinians and five Israelis.

#### Malaysia-Palestine relations

- Malaysia is a strong and vocal supporter of the Palestine cause.
- Najib is the first Prime Minister to visit Gaza.
- He has offered to help unite rival groups Fatah and Hamas via a "Reconciliation Plan" to end the division between the two largest movements.



Source: Internet

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border into Gaza by land, Najib, accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, was met on arrival by the Palestinian Prime Minister in Gaza, Ismail Haniyeh.

Najib, who was accorded an official welcome, laid the foundation stone to rebuild the Gaza administrative office building destroyed during an Israeli attack in November before visiting a school project initi-

ated by Malaysia.

Najib and Rosmah later departed for Cairo where the Prime Minister called on Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi.

Malaysia and Egypt then signed a comprehensive economic cooperation agreement.

The Prime Minister leaves Cairo today for Davos in Switzerland for the World Economic Forum.