

# PM: M'sia cannot accept Israeli athletes

*The Star - 23/11/2019 Pg 8*

**VIENNA:** Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has reiterated that Malaysia cannot accept Israeli athletes as they come from a criminal country.

He said people who are undesirable to the country must be kept out and this included people suspected of being terrorists and the like.

"We don't want to have anything to do with them (Israel), including their people. If they want to compete in sports, they can go to other countries. But for Malaysia, they are coming from a criminal country and we cannot accept them.

"Every country has the right to accept or refuse entry to other people. We have that right and we must exercise it," he said after delivering the keynote address at the

International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (IAACA) at the Vienna International Centre yesterday. He said these athletes come from a nation that did what it liked, including building settlements in other people's territories and excluding the very people from that country.

"They have raided our ship carrying aid to the Gaza people, there are many other things done by Israel that are against international laws and against morality," he said.

Israel had objected to Malaysia banning its swimmers from the 2019 World Para Swimming Championships scheduled to be held in Kuching in July.

Malaysia has been an outspoken critic of Israel for its atrocities against the Palestinian people.

On corruption, Dr Mahathir said leaders must be well chosen, and if there were any signs that a leader was corrupt, action must be taken to remove the leader.

Meanwhile, the IAACA launched the Dr Mahathir Mohamad Fund to help anti-graft officers who face grave risks in the line of duty.

The announcement was made by IAACA president Dr Ali Fetais Al-Marri during his opening address.

Al-Marri, who is also Qatar attorney general, said the fund carried the name of the Malaysian Prime Minister in recognition of Dr Mahathir's efforts in fighting graft.

Al-Marri said Qatar had agreed to kick-start the fund with one million Qatar riyal (RM1.14mil).

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would

contribute RM500,000.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir said international cooperation is vital in combating corruption and crimes due to porous borders where money can be easily moved from one country to another.

He said Malaysia experienced this when funds were transferred from 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) and laundered in the United States.

"We believe the IAACA is important as borders are now very porous. International cooperation also helps in reducing crimes," he said.

The Prime Minister's keynote address marks the first appearance of Dr Mahathir at the venue and the first by any Malaysian prime minister invited to such an important event. — Bernama