

Palestine issue must be solved, says Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR: Be prepared for more acts of terror by frustrated Muslims unless the Palestine issue is solved, says Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He condemned other countries for standing by as he accused Western powers of assisting Israel in "oppressing Palestinians and invading their land".

He also pointed out that acts of terror by Palestinians were condemned, but Israel was allowed to get away with crimes.

"There has been no occasion in history where one country set up a settlement in another country and did not allow the host country to even enter the settlements - but this was done by Israel and the world stood by and did nothing," Dr Mahathir said in a speech at an international colloquium on "Demystifying Islamophobia: Towards a Deeper Understanding of Islam", organised by the Institute of Islamic Understanding of Malaysia (Ikim) here.

"The United States backs Israel even when it commits international crimes. Over time, Palestinians became angry and frustrated and they acted on their own without any organisation," he said.

"They could not fight a war against Israel. They had only themselves. But to inflict damage, they resorted to single attacks by blow-



Guided tour: Dr Mahathir with Ikim chairman Tun Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid (right) visiting the library at Ikim during the international colloquium on 'Demystifying Islamophobia: Towards a Deeper Understanding of Islam' in Kuala Lumpur.

ing themselves up to kill the people around (them)," he added.

Dr Mahathir said many innocent civilians were killed and the world was terrorised as suicide bombers did not confine themselves to their own land.

"The Western media played up these acts of terror and the word Islamophobia was frequently used and directed at Muslims as if all

were terrorists," he said.

The Prime Minister, however, said the fact remained that acts of terror by Muslims had killed many non-combatants.

"We are now living in fear that at any time, some fanatical person might use these terror tactics to vent their anger and frustration," he said.

He pointed out that Palestinians

had gained nothing but more Israeli settlements, more walls and more roads closed to them.

"This sense of frustration and anger is widespread and we can expect more acts of terror.

"If there is justice for the Palestinians, there would be fewer acts of terror. The better thing for them to do is to gain the sympathy of the world.

"Many Americans and Europeans are sympathetic to Islam and Muslims. But if we continue to commit acts of terror, we are pushing them to support Israel," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that for a multi-religious country to be stable, discussion on religion should be done rationally.

"You can discuss (religion) like how we are doing today (in a forum). But if you are shouting on the streets, you are going to annoy many people - especially if you say something that touches on other religions.

"This country has people of many religions - if you want (Malaysia) to stay stable, don't try to run down each other's religions," he said.

Watch the video
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