

# Students encouraged to know more about Israel-Palestine conflict

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Students are encouraged to know more about the Israel-Palestine conflict, but on no account should anyone be forced to do so, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

“This is an issue related to humanity. I support the Education Minister’s move to encourage students to follow the developments. It is not to force them, but only encourage,” the premier said during the Prime Minister’s Question Time in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday. “Of course, we have guidelines to ensure no violent behaviour is encouraged, such as hatred among their peers.”

“It is only to enlighten them, give them the understanding on what happened and the meaning

of cruelty, oppression and dispossession,” he added as he explained the controversy that arose during attempts by the Education Ministry to roll out the Palestine Solidarity Week in schools this week.

On Oct 26, the Education Ministry announced that it would be holding a Palestine Solidarity Week from Oct 29 to Nov 3. The event would involve all educational institutions under the ministry including schools, vocational and matriculation colleges, and teacher training institutes nationwide.

The announcement has triggered debates and raised concerns, especially after a video clip depicting a man dressed as a militant and wielding a replica rifle during a school programme went

viral, causing concern among parents and netizens.

In response, the ministry stated that it would not tolerate any elements of extremism and violence during the Palestine Solidarity Week, even as many have called for a review of the ministry’s decision to organise the Palestine Solidarity Week.

The ministry has also released a guideline for the Palestine Solidarity Week, which it said prohibits the display of weapons and other elements that incite or are linked to violence or any promotion of political parties.

According to Anwar, Palestinian Christians have been victimised just as much as their Muslim brothers and sisters.

“For those who continue to think or suggest that the atrocities committed against the Palestinians affect Muslims alone, let it be reminded that the world’s most ancient Christian community resides in Palestine, totalling 47,000, based on a census conducted in 2017,” said Anwar.

“Palestinian Christians have also been driven out from their historic cities in large numbers, and the underlying cause is the illegal Israeli occupation and apartheid policies. In this sordid history and the on-going saga of cruelty, oppression and genocide, Palestine’s Muslim and Christian communities alike are the helpless victims,” he added.

“The point I want to make here

is that there are strong socio-cultural and spiritual connections between the Muslim and Christian communities which confer on Palestinians their unique collective identity,” he added as he emphasised the country’s stance on terrorism.

Anwar said Malaysia condemns terrorism in all its forms and condemns the killing of innocent lives and taking women and children as hostages, and the consequential massacre of innocent lives, children, women and men.