

'Stop the madness in Gaza'

Malaysia reiterates its call for an immediate ceasefire

By RAHIMY RAHIM
rahimyr@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia has reiterated its call for an immediate ceasefire after an Israeli airstrike in the besieged Gaza Strip is said to have struck a hospital, killing hundreds of victims.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim condemned the attack made by Israel, and described the recent attack as madness and going overboard.

"That is why we are calling for an immediate ceasefire to calm the situation down.

"If this continues to persist, the victims will be mothers, children and patients, and this has reached a level of madness and without humanity," he said after officiating the Path towards Greater Prosperity for Malaysia symposium at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre yesterday

Over 500 people were killed in the Israeli airstrike on the al-Ahli Baptist Hospital late Tuesday, Palestinian Health Ministry spokesperson Ashraf al-Qudra told news agency Anadolu.

Footage showed bodies scattered across the hospital grounds.

The airstrike came on the eleventh day of the conflict, with a growing international chorus of non-governmental groups and world leaders saying the Israeli bombing campaign on the besieged enclave, including healthcare facilities, homes and



Horrible situation: A Palestinian man comforting a child in central Gaza. — Bloomberg

houses of worship, violates international law and may constitute war crimes.

Anwar also hit out at Western countries for their hypocrisy over the situation in Palestine.

"The most regrettable thing is that in the Western countries that often talk about human rights, it seems like there are categories.

"There are upper-class people and then there are slave-class people, and this is what we object to, and we strongly condemn this.

"At this point, accusations and blame do not matter. The only thing that matters is the war and we urge Israel to stop it," he said.

The Prime Minister added that

he will be heading to Riyadh today to attend the Asean and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit, and is expected to discuss the conflict with other world leaders.

The Asean GCC Summit will begin in the Saudi capital tomorrow.

Asked about the status of Malaysian troops who are serving as peacekeepers under the United Nations (UN) in Lebanon, Anwar said that any decision to withdraw or remain will be made together, including with the UN.

"If the safety situation can be guaranteed, we will continue, but if it can't, we will bring them

back," said Anwar.

Tension is also flaring on Israel's border with Lebanon, creating worries that the war could spread.

On Monday, Israel's military and its defence ministry said they would evacuate 28 communities that are within 2km of the Lebanese border.

The border has been a long-time staging ground for attacks by Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed Lebanese group that has fought, with Israel in the past.