

'Support but don't go overboard'

Putrajaya to monitor Solidarity With Palestine' event in schools, says PM

SEPANG: Putrajaya will now closely monitor all activities during the Solidarity With Palestine Week (Minggu Solidariti Palestin) in schools to ensure that these activities do not "go overboard", says the Prime Minister.

Commenting on the circulation of a video that purportedly showed teachers and students in a public school in Malaysia brandishing replica firearms during one such activity, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said such things "need to be controlled".

"We discussed this in the Cabinet meeting earlier today (Friday). First, we encourage the organisation of such programmes, but we won't force all schools to participate. Secondly, we need to ensure that it doesn't become a problem," he said after the gun-brandishing video made its rounds all over social media.

The video and photos showed students and teachers parading around brandishing firearm replicas while carrying the Palestine flags and wearing the Palestinian keffiyeh scarves, said to be part of the Solidarity With Palestine Week event in schools.

The visuals were believed to have originated from a public



Concerned:

Anwar speaking to members of the press concerning the video that has gone viral on social media. - Bernama

school in Pahang.

On Thursday, the Education Ministry justified the decision to hold the Solidarity With Palestine Week at all educational institutions nationwide as a means to teach students humanitarian values such as empathy and concern towards the suffering experi-

enced by others, regardless of their background.

The ministry described the programme as a necessary intervention to be implemented among students and stated that it is in support of the Malaysian government's stance to continue jointly defending Palestinian rights.

This comes as 17 civil society groups in Sarawak voiced their disagreement with the Education Ministry's instruction for all government education institutions to observe the solidarity week in support of the Palestinian cause.

Meanwhile, Anwar said Malaysia would continue to col-

laborate with the Arab League and Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to monitor developments in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

"We are currently cooperating with the OIC and the Arab League, and there are daily discussions on current developments.

"However, the priority is mostly humanitarian (efforts) and stopping the attacks.

"That's the priority of Islamic countries," he said after his lunch at Ramli Corner Selera Kampong here yesterday.

The Prime Minister was asked whether Malaysia, along with the OIC and the Arab League, would boycott the United Nations (UN) following the UN Security Council's (UNSC) decision to reject a resolution proposed by Russia that called for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza.

Concerning allegations made by a local company that the price of rice in Malaysia remains high due to a monopoly held by Padiberas Nasional Bhd (Bernas), Anwar stated that the government has been successful in ensuring that the price of rice imported by Bernas remains controlled and follows global prices.