

Malaysia, Singapore agree on aid to Palestine

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia and Singapore agree that providing humanitarian assistance to Palestine is paramount, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at a joint media conference with Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, after the 10th Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat yesterday.

"I think what the common position is, is important," he said, alluding to the different approach taken by each side since the Israel-Palestine conflict began on Oct 7.

Anwar was responding to a question on the approach taken and if there would be any spillover effect on Malaysia-Singapore bilateral ties caused by the reactions and sentiments in both countries on the current situation in the Middle East.

He said Malaysia took a much stronger position on the conflict as the whole issue in Palestine has not only been occurring for the past two weeks.

"But it's what we term as politics of dispossession. One country cannot continue to colonise another part of the Palestinian lands. But what is critical for now is, of course, peace and to stop the killing of civilians and babies.

"Of course, sentiments in Malaysia are very strong," Anwar said.

On Oct 27, member nations of the United Nations General Assembly voted in favour of a ceasefire resolution on the Gaza conflict, with the aim of protecting people and honouring their legal and humanitarian commitments.

Malaysia and Singapore were among the 120 countries that voted in favour of the ceasefire, along with other neighbours Thailand, Brunei and Indonesia.



Anwar and Lee after the joint media conference at the Presidential Palace in Singapore yesterday. - AFP/IC

Meanwhile, Lee said he does not think that the conflict should affect Singapore-Malaysia bilateral relations, noting that Singapore has made repeated statements about this conflict and condemned what's happening in the Middle East.

"The violence, the human tragedy of civilians and innocent victims being killed and massacred, and (it is our) hope that the two parties can make progress towards a negotiated two-state solution to the Middle

East (conflict). And I think Singaporeans understand where we stand."

He pointed out that Malaysia's situation is not the same as Singapore's due to a different diplomatic situation, but there's no reason for that to cause difficulty between the two countries.

"Their (Malaysia) situation is not the same as ours (Singapore) because we have diplomatic relations with Israel, but at the same time, we have friendly

relations with the Palestine authority.

"And Malaysia has very friendly relations with the Palestine authorities, but they don't have diplomatic relations with Israel, so the diplomatic situation is not identical," said Lee.

The Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat held in Singapore this time is the highest level of bilateral mechanism, hosted alternately since 2007. - Bernama