

Meeting with Hamas to leverage on good ties: Anwar

DOHA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has admitted that his meeting with the top Hamas leader yesterday might cause anxiety among Malaysia's friends, especially in the West.

However, he explained that Malaysia is an independent country supporting peace efforts in the Gaza Strip and is using its good relations with Hamas for this purpose.

Citing Qatar as an example, he said the peninsular Arab country had used its good ties with Hamas in negotiations which led to the release of 109 captives.

"We are also taking the same

> 'Move facilitates Malaysia's intention to support peace efforts in Gaza'

approach (to leverage our 'good ties)," he said at the end of his three-day official visit to Qatar on Tuesday.

Anwar said at the meeting with Ismail Haniyeh, Malaysia requested Hamas to consider the views of various parties to seek a speedy and peaceful settlement to the Gaza conflict, Bernama reported.

He said he could see that the

Hamas leader was adopting an open attitude to seek a settlement but the Israeli regime must stop its atrocities in Gaza and attacks in the West Bank.

"Qatar is taking the same stance and (Qatar Prime Minister) Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani told me that in his negotiations with both sides, Hamas has shown a willingness to

fulfil several conditions but unfortunately, Israel refused to accept these conditions."

Anwar said Hamas, like PLO, Fatah and the Palestinian Authority, has the right to defend its territory from an occupying foreign power and Malaysia is taking the approach of supporting peacemaking efforts.

"Our approach is to be in contact with the political body of Hamas and not get involved in any military activities. So, this is what we want to clarify and which I believe our friends (from the West) will raise," he added.

Anwar said in his bilateral meeting with the President of Poland Andrzej Duda on the sidelines of the Qatar Economic Forum, he explained why he needed to meet the Hamas leader.

"We explained (to Poland) there is no reason why we cannot have the discussion (with Hamas).

"Malaysia is an independent country, we make a wise decision to help seek a resolution, not to instigate it.

"Before the meeting, I asked the views of the Emir of Qatar and Qatar prime minister because they know the situation better and are close to Hamas, in seeking a fair peacemaking method," he said.

Anwar's meeting with Haniyeh, the Hamas Political Bureau chief, lasted more than an hour. Also present was former Hamas chairman Khaled Mashal.

That was Anwar's first meeting with Haniyeh in his capacity as the Malaysian prime minister.

Anwar had met the Hamas leader twice before, in 2020 when Haniyeh visited Malaysia and in 2019.



Anwar trying a traditional delicacy of the Kyrgyz Republic, called *Borsok*, upon his arrival at Manas International Airport.

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