

'RECKLESS AND MISLEADING'

PM DENIES RECOGNISING ISRAEL

**He slams those
who accuse him
of acknowledging
Zionist regime's
existence**

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P RIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim condemned those who accused him of acknowledging Israel's existence and its right to defend itself.

Anwar did not mince his words, calling their actions as reckless and misleading.

"What sort of politics is this? Deceiving the public, misleading them and making false accusations in the name of Islam?"

"These so-called *penunggang agama* (religion exploiters) have no understanding of what they



KAMARULZAIDI
KAMIS

are saying."

He said this at a press conference here, where he was attending the Apec Economic Leaders' Meeting.

"If someone asks, 'Does Israel exist?' Yes, it exists. However, Malaysia does not recognise it, meaning we do not send diplomatic officials and there are no diplomatic relations with Israel.

"That's what it means."

He also denied that he recognised Israel, calling these accusations slanderous and made under the guise of religion.

He said Malaysia had never



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim meeting with Hong Kong chief executive John Lee Ka-chiu at the Apec Economic Leaders' Meeting in Lima, Peru, yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

recognised Israel as *de jure* (legally), but did acknowledge its existence as a *de facto* reality.

He said that during his recent trip to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, he proposed that Israel be expelled from the United Nations.

This proposal, Anwar said, reflected Malaysia's strong opposition to Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people.

Anwar questioned the opposition's actions, accusing them of allowing Israeli ships to dock at Port Klang and Israeli planes to use Malaysian airspace while they were in power.

"When we are in power, do we allow Israel to trade? No! Do we allow Israeli planes to use our airspace? No," he said.

However, he expressed his willingness to move forward and focus on current issues.

"I consider that matter closed. Let's move forward and leave the past behind. Unfortunately, they don't. They keep lying and in-

citing (trouble)," he said.

The issue arose following Anwar's recent interview with CNN, which went viral after the edited interview clip, now circulating on social media, created a false impression that the government acknowledged Israel's existence and its right to self-defence.

Anwar's visit to Peru had strengthened diplomatic ties between Malaysia and the country. He said the visit had unlocked export opportunities worth RM1.24 billion. He said Peruvian companies had shown a strong interest in Malaysian products including steel and glass-based building materials, medical equipment, palm oil, chemicals as well as food and beverage.

On the Apec sidelines, Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz held discussions with his counterparts from Singapore, Japan and New Zealand.