

'Excerpts from CNN interview taken out of context'

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said his statement during an interview with CNN, excerpts of which have since been manipulated to show that the government recognised Israel, was taken out of context.

He said while some might be comfortable with his choice of words or phrases used in the interview, it should not be prolonged.

"I was interviewed by numerous international media, including CNN, Al Jazeera and Bloomberg. One or two (statements) were taken out of context. But that's okay, I don't wish to argue on it.

"However, it is unfair to link these statements and insult us, especially when we steadfastly oppose these issues.

"For me, this is not about politics.

It is an issue rooted in our decades-long struggle (in defending Palestine)," he said in response to a question from Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainuddin (PN-Larut) in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

He said it was unfair to label him a hypocrite and liar based on the CNN interview.

"Let me clarify that, within the context of the United Nations, it is considered a matter of state rights.

However, Israel has never been recognised by us from the beginning.

"I have been called a liar and *munafik* allegedly for supporting Israel. This is why I condemn this statement made by those riding on religion.

"The context was whether Israel, as a state, has a right to exist and in that context, I have clearly attacked them.

"Second, the principle within the UN is that any country that is attacked has the right to defend itself.

"Not that I am saying we are defending them. How could I, when I have called them barbaric, violent, Zionist, and oppressive? That has always been my stance."

Anwar said he also disagreed with the term "ceasefire" being

used to end the occupation in Palestine, which did not apply in the context where people were being oppressed.

"What kind of ceasefire is that? People kill you, attack you and then they say ceasefire.

"The term ceasefire is wrong. That is why, (in my speech) in Riyadh, I said the aggression must stop. Stop the oppression, stop the colonisation and use a different terminology," he said.

On another subject, Anwar said Malaysia would formulate a poverty eradication and hunger alleviation plan, which will be presented for international collaboration among G20 leading economies.

He said the government had been asked to submit a strategy for the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty plan, led by Brazil as the G20 chair.

"President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is very familiar with poverty eradication programmes because he has a strong sense of responsibility to eradicate extreme poverty in a short period, even though the scale is vast (in Brazil).

"We have been asked to submit our framework and the implementation of programmes in Malaysia for review and to be jointly executed," he said.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said the Implementation Coordination

Unit and the Economic Planning Unit under the Prime Minister's Department would prepare the plan.

At the same time, he called on the International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation to reform the global financial architecture to support free trade without discrimination against smaller nations.

This point, he said, was raised in various meetings and dialogues during the APEC Economic Leaders' Week in Peru, the G20 Summit in Brazil, and the Extraordinary Arab and Islamic Summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, which he attended recently.



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