

23 Malaysians arrive in Istanbul

PM: They will be home soon after undergoing health and wellness checks

PETALING JAYA: The 23 Malaysian volunteers who were detained by Israel as part of the intercepted Global Sumud Flotilla will be returning home in a day or two from Istanbul.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had agreed to help facilitate the return of the Malaysians following lengthy negotiations, involving representatives from Turkiye, Malaysia, Qatar and the United States.

"Three Malaysians were reluctant to sign the deportation orders from Israel, but our opinion is that they should agree to it... and bring all of them back, and we can discuss our plans from there," said Anwar.

At about 9.30pm, the Prime Minister announced that the Malaysian volunteers had safely arrived in Istanbul and will undergo health and wellness checks, and be provided with any other post-trauma support they might need.

"They will come back (to Malaysia), maybe tomorrow night or the day after. The govern-



On track: Anwar contacting nine Freedom Flotilla volunteers who are onboard the Conscience and TM Denmark Boat. — Screenshot from Anwar's Facebook

ment's machinery under the Foreign Ministry will ensure the process to bring them home runs smoothly," Anwar said.

The GSF, comprising over 500 activists from 45 countries, had embarked on a voyage towards Gaza as a gesture of solidarity and an effort to break the Israeli blockade.

The flotilla was sailing across the Mediterranean carrying vital

food and medical supplies, bearing a message of peace that demands an end to the war and famine, and the immediate opening of humanitarian corridors to Gaza.

Anwar acknowledged that while the mission faced significant challenges in reaching Gaza's waters, the GSF activists made a substantial contribution.

"The regime strongly prohibits

and resists any form of humanitarian aid. This only occurs when a country is led by leaders with a cruel and uncivilised philosophy. A civilised nation, at the very least, would allow space for humanitarian assistance," he said.

The Prime Minister said the GSF mission serves as a major lesson for the world and believed that the latest peace plan proposed by US President Donald Trump reflects the widespread global sentiment surrounding the Palestinian issue.

He said Malaysia will give its limited, support to the deal struck between Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to end the war in Gaza.

This is because, he said, Palestine's freedom and independence must be guaranteed.

"But this decision made by the government is, of course, tied to the decisions made by the Arab countries, the Islamic countries and the decision from Hamas itself," Anwar added.

Trump had previously secured Netanyahu's backing on a US-sponsored peace proposal in

late September to end the war in Gaza, though Hamas has yet to make its position on this known.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister contacted nine Malaysians participating in the Freedom Flotilla Coalition humanitarian mission.

In a video call, he gave them encouragement and prayed that their journey to Gaza would be eased.

"Their sacrifices to boost the spirit of humanity serve as a prime example to all Malaysians on the meaning of bravery, commitment and solidarity," he said.

The nine Malaysians are chief delegate Prof Emeritus Dr Mohd Alauddin Mohd Ah; doctors Dr Fauziah Mohd Hassan, Dr Hafiz Sulaiman, Dr Ili Syakira Mohd Suhaimi, Dr Maziah Muhammad; lecturers Prof Dr Mohd Afandi Salleh and Dr Noorhasyimah Ismail; MyCARE trustee Norsham Abu Bakar; and Astro Awani journalist Syafik Shukri Abdul Jalil.