

M'sians send powerful message

Anwar leads thousands to show solidarity with Palestinians

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KUALA LUMPUR: Thousands of Malaysians, led by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, filled the Axiata Arena indoor stadium last night in a powerful show of solidarity with Palestine and to celebrate the safe return of 23 Malaysian humanitarian activists from the Global Sumud Flotilla (GSF) mission.

The atmosphere was electric as the crowd, waving Palestinian and Malaysian flags, chanted "Free Palestine" in unison.

Anwar, who arrived just before 9pm, joined the activists on stage as they recounted their harrowing experience of being detained by Israeli forces.

In his address, Anwar praised the activists' courage, calling their mission a historic moment for the nation.

He said they had made Malaysia proud by carrying the country's message of support and solidarity to Gaza, despite the risks involved.

"They have done us proud. They represented us in delivering Malaysia's message of support and solidarity for Gaza," he told the crowd.

Anwar reaffirmed his government's commitment to support humanitarian efforts for Gaza, and explained that maintaining good relations with the United States, including its President Donald Trump, was a



Strong show of support: Anwar arriving at the Sumud Nusantara rally at the Axiata Arena indoor stadium in Bukit Jalil. — Bernama

strategic decision.

"We must be wise and rational. This is not about sentiment or pride, but about positioning Malaysia effectively to push for a resolution to the Gaza conflict," he said, addressing criticism over Trump's upcoming

visit to Malaysia.

The 23 activists were among those detained by Israeli forces on Oct 2 while en route to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza.

They were later released and returned to Malaysia late Tuesday.

Also present at the rally were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil, Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, and Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming.

Anwar said he would contact Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid through the Rafah crossing.

He also revealed that Turkiye would again assist in the repatriation of nine Malaysians who were part of another humanitarian mission - the Freedom Flotilla Coalition and Thousand Madleens to Gaza - which was intercepted and seized by Israeli forces at about 10.50am (Malaysian time) yesterday.

Humanitarian Care Malaysia (MyCARE) chairman Datuk Seri Prof Dr Kamal Nasharuddin Mustapha said contact with the volunteers on board the vessels was lost at 10.03am.

The latest mission involved eight Malaysians on board the vessel *Conscience*, which departed Porto Otranto, Italy, on Sept 30, led by Prof Emeritus Dr Mohd Alauddin Mohd Ali.

The group included three doctors - Dr Fauziah Mohd Hassan, Dr Hafiz Sulaiman and Dr Ili Syakira Mohd Suhaimi - as well as two lecturers, Prof Dr Mohd Afandi Salleh and Dr Noorhasyimah Ismail, MyCARE trustee Norsham Abu Bakar, and Astro Awani journalist Syafik Shukri Abdul Jalil.

Another Malaysian, Dr Maziah Muhammad, was on board the *Umm Saad*, which left Catania, Sicily, on Sept 27 with seven other vessels.