

Anwar: Assist Palestinians from home don't travel to Gaza

PUTRAJAYA: Those who want to assist Palestinians should do so from Malaysia, rather than head to the war-torn Gaza Strip, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said this was the message conveyed by several NGOs such as Mercy Malaysia and those involved in the Ops Ihsan and Sumud Flotilla initiative, whom he met recently.

“What is needed is medication, food and basic supplies. They don’t need our large presence there.

“This should be a reminder because many people want to go there,” he said when met after performing Friday prayers.

Anwar also said Palestinians in the Gaza Strip were not in favour of large numbers of volunteers entering the area.

“They are saying they have the labour, but they have no jobs. So let them work. I have reminded NGOs here that if they want to help, they should focus on preparations and support from here,” he added.

The Prime Minister said thousands of Malaysians have recently applied to volunteer at the war-torn enclave.

“This is not possible,” he added.

Anwar said he would speak with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi at 2pm today to discuss the reopening of the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt.

“I will give some other views as well, so that when the Rafah border is reopened, there is space for us to channel humanitarian aid based on present regulations.”

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar has previously said the Rafah border crossing could reopen and it is currently coordinating with Egypt to set a date.

Presently, the Rafah crossing is closed and all humanitarian supplies bound for Gaza would instead have to pass through the Karem Abu Salem border crossing after Israeli security inspections.