

Gaza mission slams UN chief
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By R. Sittamparam

SEPANG: Members of the latest Perdana Global Peace Foundation (PGPF) mission to Gaza have condemned United Nations secretary-general Ban Ki-moon for "endorsing" Israel's illegal blockade on Gaza.

PGPF mission leader Matthias Chang described Ban's recent declaration calling for a stop of more peace flotillas to Gaza as "illogical and intimidating".

"His declaration that all aid materials must go through legal channels via Israel shows that he endorses Israel's illegal occupation of Gaza and the West Bank," he said at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport yesterday upon his return from Egypt.

The crew and passengers of the Spirit of Rachel Corrie comprised 12 people -- seven Malaysians, two Indian nationals, two Irish activists and one from Canada. Seven of the remaining mission members arrived at the KLIA yesterday after being away on the mission for more than two weeks.

Another mission member, anti-war activist Derek Graham, 43, from Ireland, said the public had seen what had been happening since 2008 with no reconstruction allowed in Gaza.

"No humanitarian aid was allowed in. This man (Ban) wants it (aid) to go through legal channels, which are so bureaucratic. Nothing has gone in yet."

He said 28,000 tonnes of raw sewage had been going into the Mediterranean Sea every year since 2006.

"The Mediterranean Sea is now polluted with 140,000 tonnes of toxic sewage. The World Health Organisation (WHO) and UN have come up with reports stating that if there was an outbreak of cholera in Gaza, it would affect the whole Mediterranean area," he said, adding that it would cause all Mediterranean countries billions in revenue loss.

He said Ban should do what he was appointed to do and actually stand up for countries and not just the great powers and try to get the Rafa crossing open to allow humanitarian aid to be brought in.

PGPF founder Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who greeted the mission members at the airport, said the Israelis, who were also affected by the sewage effluents flowing into the Mediterranean Sea, should support the PGPF mission to supply PVC pipes to restore Gaza's damaged sewage system.

"But you know, the Israelis, they don't care at all for humanitarian aid. They just want to show they have power and break the law."

Dr Mahathir said another aim of the aid mission was to show that "we don't respect Israel's blockade".

"We want to break through the blockade and in fact we succeeded because it was only about 400m to Gaza when the Israelis fired shots at the ship. For me, the mission was a success."



Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali greeting Derek Graham and his wife Jenny Graham at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport yesterday. With them is Matthias Chang (right). — Picture by Izhari Ariffin

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