

**PAS refuses to recognise Israel**  
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**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 22 — PAS has refused to accept the Israeli state although its spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said today he “understood Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim’s explanation” over his support for “all efforts to protect the security of the state of Israel.”

The Kelantan menteri besar said in a statement that “the existence of Israel is an injustice” as it has murdered and stripped away the rights of Palestinians.

“PAS absolutely does not recognise the haram state of Israel. PAS will firmly back the Palestinians’ who have been insulted in their own land. It is up to Anwar if he accepts PAS’s stand,” he said.

PKR de facto leader Anwar had met Nik Aziz yesterday morning to explain that his support for Israel was based on the condition the Jewish state does not thwart the Palestinians’ ambitions for statehood.

The PAS Ulama Council, led by Nik Aziz, had called on the opposition leader to retract his remarks or sue the Wall Street Journal for misreporting his remarks on the issue.

Last month, the WSJ had quoted Anwar as saying in an interview that he supported “all efforts to protect the security of the state of Israel.”

But the newspaper said Anwar stopped short of saying he would open diplomatic ties with the Jewish state, a step the former deputy prime minister said remains contingent on Israel respecting the aspirations of Palestinians.

Anwar came under heavy fire from Umno and its media after his statement was published by the WSJ in January.

He was forced to defend himself by stressing that his remarks in the newspaper meant that he supported a two-state solution, which he said was also mentioned by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman when the latter addressed the United Nations General Assembly in September last year.

But Nik Aziz made clear today PAS will not acknowledge Israel and said this proved PAS has not “sold out its principles for the sake of being with Pakatan Rakyat.”

Malaysia is a staunch supporter of Palestine and has no diplomatic ties with Israel.

Muslim politicians have long vied for support from Malays by denouncing what they say are inhumane acts of aggression by Israel towards its neighbour.

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