

**Blocking Envoys A Crude Exercise Of Power - PLO Executive Committee
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 6 (Bernama) -- The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) executive committee has condemned Israel's decision preventing four foreign ministers, from Bangladesh, Cuba, Indonesia and Malaysia, from entering Palestine to attend the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) meeting in Ramallah.

Dr Hanan Ashrawi, making the statement on behalf of the committee, described the act as "a blatant and crude exercise of power and a form of political seige."

In the statement issued by the Palestinian Embassy here, she said Israel's treatment of Palestine as an internal issue and its attempts to isolate the Palestinian people from the rest of the world, further emphasised why the country needed to achieve state status at the United Nations as a step towards its exercise of self-determination and freedom.

The two-day Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting of the NAM Committee on Palestine in Ramallah, beginning Aug 5, was to show support and solidarity of the NAM member countries towards Palestine, it said.

It was also to study and evaluate the current situation in Palestine, including the rise in illegal settlements and the violation of the rights of the Palestinian people by Israel.

Dr Ashrawi also pointed out that the Palestine Embassy applauded the position of solidarity adopted by representatives of the other NAM countries in response to Israel's arrogant refusal to allow the international diplomats to have access to Palestine.

"Israel is constantly slighting the international community and getting away with it. We expect that the Non-Aligned Movement countries' rejection of such an insult would be a precedent for other states to follow," she added.

Malaysia also condemned Israel's act. Israel had denied entry to the ministers on the ground that the countries they represented did not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

However, Malaysia's Foreign Ministry said that Israel had no valid reason to bar some of the foreign ministers and their delegations from Ramallah, as it was located in Palestine, and not in Israel.

Israel's decision was also condemned by the NAM Ministerial Committee on Palestine. It called on the NAM Coordinating Bureau in New York to further consider this "serious incident" and take appropriate action.

"The committee deeply abhors the fact that it was unable to demonstrate its solidarity with the Palestinian people by holding its meeting in Ramallah," it said in a joint statement made available to the media here by the Malaysian Foreign Ministry.

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