

**Malaysia Ready To Send Aid To Gaza - Najib
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PUTRAJAYA, July 15 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is ready to mobilise a humanitarian aid mission to Gaza in meeting a request from Palestine, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said Tuesday.

He said Khalid Meshaal, leader of the Hamas political bureau, had requested for aid when he telephoned the latter Monday night to convey the sympathies of the Malaysian people over the suffering of the Palestinians.

"I informed him that we are ready to send aid," Najib told a press conference at his official residence, Seri Perdana, in Putrajaya.

Prime Minister said he had asked UMNO Welfare Bureau chairman Datuk Seri Abdul Azeez Abdul Rahim to make preparations to mobilise humanitarian aid such as foodstuff and medicines.

"They will also bring along orthopaedic specialists and surgeons to do whatever possible in terms of medication and so on," he said.

Najib said the date for the despatch of the humanitarian aid had yet to be determined as that would depend on Egypt opening up the Rafah crossing to allow entrance into Gaza.

"Most probably, the aid mission can be carried out in two weeks," he said.

Prime Minister said Malaysia had made an open proposition for the United Nations and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to act against Israel. Israel had launched attacks in Gaza in recent days.

"We will continue to coax through diplomatic channels for the two organisations to do something," he said.

Asked whether he had contacted other world leaders, Najib said: "Not yet; I will see the developments."

When asked whether Malaysia would take the lead in persuading other Islamic countries to pressure Israel to stop its attacks on Gaza, Najib said: "We may not play the leading role because we are not in that area. We must play our part because the level of suffering is very alarming."

Najib said Malaysia was collecting cash aid through various activities to help the people of Palestine.

He said he encouraged non-governmental organisations which wanted to give aid to contact the UMNO Welfare Bureau to coordinate the effort.

"Our focal point is the UMNO Welfare Bureau. There will be coordination because they will undertake the mission and take along the aid," he said.

Najib said that in his 10-minute telephone conversation with Khalid, he expressed Malaysia's strong condemnation of the attacks of the Zionist regime which had resulted in the deaths of innocent people.

Khalid had expressed his appreciation for the sympathies of Malaysians and Malaysia's strong stand in the matter, he said.

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