

Malaysia Underscores Urgent Need For Solution To Palestine/Israel Dispute

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By Manik Mehta

NEW YORK, Oct 24 (Bernama) -- Seventy years have gone by and still, there is no sign of an end to the Palestine/Israel conflict.

As such, Malaysia's Foreign Deputy Minister Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican has urged the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to abandon its hitherto unsuccessful bilateral talks as a means to end the conflict.

Instead, he said the UNSC should take another more viable approach to urgently resolve the conflict which had taken a toll of lives and prolonged human suffering.

"I came to address the Security Council and explain Malaysia's position on the escalating violence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and also point out the futility of seeking a solution through direct bilateral talks between Palestine and Israel.

"We need a different approach to the problem," he said in a recent interview with Bernama in New York after his address at the UNSC.

Reezal Merican said United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who had just returned from a visit to Palestine and Israel and met with their respective leaders, had also briefed the UNSC on the situation in the region.

Malaysia would also like to see the deployment of UN peace-keeping forces in the conflict zone to calm tempers that flare up in the region.

The UN peace-keeping force - it has assumed new functions as peace-building force - has also been requested by the Palestinians to provide protection for the Palestinian population, and prevent violations of international humanitarian law in the treatment of the Palestinian population.

Meanwhile, the issue of the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 in July last year keeps cropping up in diplomatic circles.

Five countries - Australia, Belgium, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Ukraine - made a proposal on July 14, this year, urging the Security Council to set up an international criminal tribunal to bring to justice the perpetrators behind the shooting down of the aircraft.

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