

Malaysia Reiterates Call for UN Protection of Occupied Palestinian Territory
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 20 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has reiterated its call for United Nations (UN) protection of the occupied Palestinian territory, in line with international humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva conventions.

Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the UN, Datuk Ramlan Ibrahim said such protection would go a long way towards ending impunity in the occupied territory and towards peace and security in the region, pending the final comprehensive settlement to end Israeli occupation.

"This Council must send a clear message that impunity must be stopped and that all parties, including state and non-state actors, should be held accountable for violations of international humanitarian law."

He said this at the Security Council's open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, in New York on Tuesday. The speech was made available to Bernama, today.

Ramlan said Malaysia remained deeply concerned over the deliberate targeting of, and indiscriminate attacks against civilians, medical personnel and facilities that had become increasingly common features in conflict zones.

He said the growing scale of such violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, coupled with unprecedented levels of brutality and barbarism by the parties to various conflicts around the world indicated a concerning trend of flagrant disregard for long established humanitarian norms and standards.

Thus, Ramlan said, this level of impunity must not be left unchecked.

"Civilians caught in conflict zones are subjected to added suffering and trauma through displacement and denial of basic necessities. Women and children are particularly at risk from sexual and gender-based violence.

"This culture of impunity only serves to further poison the already toxic atmosphere of conflict."

He said there was no lack of international laws or other applicable norms to regulate the behaviour of states or non-state actors in conflict situations, particularly with regard to the protection of civilians.

"What is lacking is compliance with such standards by parties to the conflict on the one hand, and political will on the part of the international community on the other to decisively address threats to the safety and security of civilians," he added.

At the same time, Ramlan said Malaysia acknowledged the UN system's response, particularly the fact that an increasing number of UN peace operations now contain civilian protection mandates.

"We fully endorse the view that in mandating its peacekeepers with ensuring the protection of civilians, the UN must ensure that peacekeepers are adequately trained, equipped and receive the necessary logistical and technological support to enable them to carry out the mandated tasks effectively," he said.

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