

Malaysia maintains ban on Israeli athletes competing in the country

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10/01/2019

PUTRAJAYA, Jan 10 (Bernama) -- The government maintains its stand of prohibiting Israeli athletes from competing in the 2019 World Para Swimming Championships in Kuching from July 29 to Aug 4, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said that if the Israeli squad was insistent on participating in the championships, it would be a violation (of the ban).

“We maintain our stand on the prohibition. If they do come, it is a violation. If they want to withdraw Malaysia’s right to host the championships, they can do so,” he told a press conference after chairing a meeting of the Special Cabinet Committee on Anti-Corruption here.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on Malaysia’s prohibition on Israeli athletes participating in the championships. This has elicited an objection from the Olympic Committee of Israel which has put pressure on the organisers for its athletes to be issued visas to come to Malaysia.

The championships are seen as an important platform for qualification to the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games.

The Paralympic Council of Malaysia, as the organiser of the championships, is reportedly in a dilemma owing to the prohibition on Israeli athletes competing in the tournament.

Yesterday, Deputy Youth and Sports Minister Steven Sim Chee Keong said Malaysia would not allow Israeli Paralympic swimmers to enter the country to participate in the championships because Malaysia’s foreign policy with regard to Israel is “very clear’.

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Source: <http://www.bernama.com/en/news.php?id=1683448>