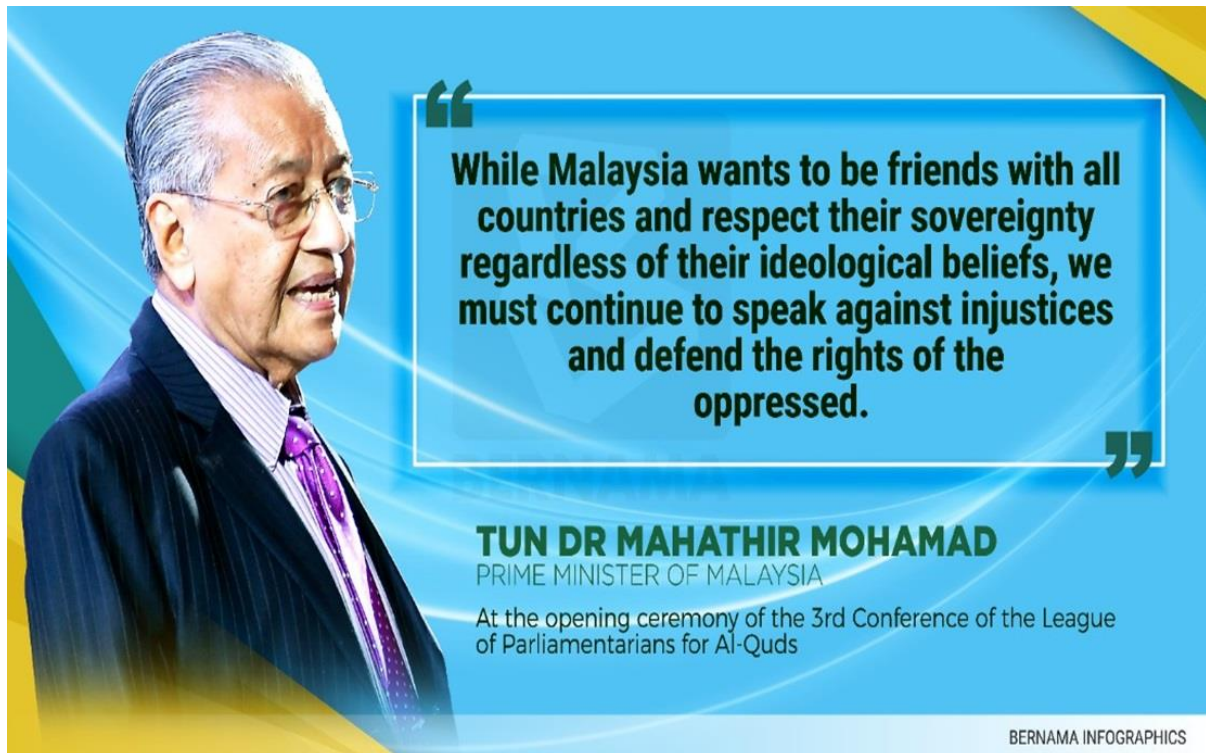


# 'Deal of the Century' utterly unacceptable, grossly unjust - Mahathir

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**“While Malaysia wants to be friends with all countries and respect their sovereignty regardless of their ideological beliefs, we must continue to speak against injustices and defend the rights of the oppressed.”**

**TUN DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD**

PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

At the opening ceremony of the 3rd Conference of the League of Parliamentarians for Al-Quds

BERNAMA INFOGRAPHICS

PETALING JAYA, Feb 8 -- In a harsh criticism of the 'Deal of the Century', Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it will only further the domination of an apartheid-like occupation over millions of Palestinians.

"Malaysia finds the proposal utterly unacceptable and is grossly unjust," the prime minister said as he pointed out that the proposed 'peace plan' will never result in a contiguous sovereign Palestinian State.

To make things worse, he said, it hands over the holy city of Jerusalem on a silver platter to the Israeli side in absolute disregard of the feelings of millions of Muslims and Christians worldwide.

"This deal will only bring more conflicts to the region, and antagonise billions of people around the world," he said when opening the Third Conference of the League of Parliamentarians for Al-Quds here today.

Dr Mahathir said it was a one-sided deal hatched by the United States and Israel without consultation with the Palestinians that spiked any attempts to bring peace or justice to Palestine.

"This 'peace plan' acknowledges only the powerful occupier while completely ignoring the rights of the oppressed," the prime minister said.

He said it was truly disappointing that after more than seven decades, only one side of the Two-State Solution had come into form - Israel - while the Palestinian people were still left struggling for justice, peace and a sovereign state of their own.

Dr Mahathir noted that the plight of the Palestinians was a central issue for many international communities irrespective of religion, ethnicity or nation.

"Given the concern for the issue, it is incumbent upon us as citizens of the world to ensure the issue is not trivialised, dismissed or swept under the carpet," he said.

Alluding to the various United Nations resolutions passed in favour of the Palestinian people, Dr Mahathir said: "What good would resolutions after resolutions being adopted if they can be ignored with impunity. Worse still, the very opposite of the resolutions are carried out."

He told the congregation of global parliamentarians that all platforms available should be used by like-minded people to continue voicing concerns and register anger over the inhumane and barbaric acts that the Tel Aviv regime has inflicted on the Palestinians.

"We are duty bound, and this responsibility is further amplified when powerful nations that had styled themselves as the defender of justice and freedom choose to be silent while the atrocities are being committed.

"In other words, if we too choose to be silent, the blood from the murders and killings of the Palestinians by the Israelis is on our hands as well," the prime minister said.

Dr Mahathir underscored that Malaysia will always support Palestine and that its foreign policy towards the latter has remained the same since this country became independent.

"While Malaysia wants to be friends with all countries and respect their sovereignty regardless of their ideological beliefs, we must continue to speak against injustices and defend the rights of the oppressed," he said.

Speaking to the press later, Dr Mahathir said that to win the Palestinian struggle, a proper strategy will have to be devised, and that acting in anger and frustration would not help the Palestinian cause.

"That's why we think that there must be a proper strategy mounted by Palestine backed by all their supporters in a bid to win the hearts and minds of people, that this is a struggle for justice and peace," the prime minister said.

Dr Mahathir was also critical of Israel's seizure of Palestinian land, describing it a gross injustice.

The prime minister lamented that what happened to the Jews under Nazi Germany appeared not to have made them more sympathetic or more concerned about the matter of fairness and justice.

"Instead they want to inflict injustice on other people," he said.

To a question, Dr Mahathir underscored that the Palestinian issue is a matter of justice and humanity.

"It is not a question of Muslims and non-Muslims, religion has got nothing to (do with) it. These people (Palestinians) are deprived of their human rights, and I think we must be very concerned about this," he said.

Present at the conference were Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail who is also conference organising committee advisor and the League of Parliamentarians for Al-Quds president Sheikh Hamid Abdullah Al-Ahmar.

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