

Malaysian PM condemned over 'anti-Semitism'

(Filed: 17/10/2003)

The Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad has been condemned by Israel for "anti-Semitic" remarks made at a summit of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Addressing the conference, which is being held in Malaysia's administrative capital of Putrajaya, Mahathir said: "The Europeans killed six million Jews out of 12 million. But today the Jews rule this world by proxy. They get others to fight and die for them."

Malaysia foreign minister Syed Hamid Albar later said that the remarks had been taken out of context and apologised for the "misunderstanding". Mahathir's speech received a standing ovation from those present including President Mohammad Khatami of Iran and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.



Mahathir Mohamad

Levy Neno, an Israeli foreign ministry official, said: "Israel reacts with disgust to these anti-Semitic remarks which are an insult to the victims of the Shoah. We hope that all enlightened countries in the world concerned with peace and democracy will protest against these heinous declarations."

Another foreign ministry official, Nimrod Barkan said that Silvan Shalom, Israel's foreign minister, would "launch a worldwide campaign against such remarks".

Mahathir had told the conference, the largest gathering of Muslim leaders since the 2001 attacks on the United States, that all Muslims were suffering "oppression and humiliation," with their religion accused of promoting terrorism.

He said Muslims could at least take a common stand on the Palestinian struggle against Israel, and it was time to plan a "counter-attack" against the enemies of Islam who treated Muslims with "contempt and dishonour".

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