



Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University director Dr Azyumardi Azra (right) presenting the doctorate to Abdullah yesterday. — AFP picture

Demand ceasefire in Lebanon, PM tells ummah

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MUSLIM countries must demand that the United Nations push for a ceasefire in Lebanon and deploy peacekeeping forces there, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"Clearly we Muslims cannot prevent an invasion of Lebanon on our own. Our own internal sectarian conflicts have weakened us and these have been the major cause of Muslim disunity," said the Prime Minister, who is also the current chairman of the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

"Nevertheless, let us search our hearts and summon our inner strength and decide to do something about Lebanon," he said before receiving an honorary doctorate in Islamic thoughts from Indonesia's Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University.

Abdullah said the case of Lebanon was indeed a very sad



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commentary on the issue of morality in the conduct of international affairs.

He was troubled that in the face of callous disregard for the sanctity of human life and sovereignty of nation states, the international community was unable to react.

"Even the UN, our best hope for international peace and security, is in apparent paralysis and unable to act.

The Prime Minister said at times like this, the need to strengthen the *ummah* and the Muslim countries has become even more urgent than before.

Muslim countries needed to use reliable guidelines for a compre-

hensive development of the *ummah* which should include the development of quality human capital through education.

"A comprehensive development of the economy must also be undertaken. I believe, Islam Hadhari, which Malaysia has adopted has now become relevant to our times," he said.

Abdullah was awarded the honorary doctorate *Honoris Causa* in Islamic Thought in recognition of his contribution to contemporary Islamic thought.

A citation was read out by Prof Dr Abdul Malik Fadjar which described Abdullah as the leader of one of the most culturally diverse and prosperous countries in the world.

He said the Prime Minister was an icon and a role model for Muslims around the world, particularly students of Islamic studies be-

cause of his own background.

He also said Abdullah's biography was testimony to the fact that he continually sought to demonstrate that Islam was compatible with modernity not only in values, but also in practice.

Later, Abdullah paid a courtesy call to Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono at the Istana Negara.

Abdullah arrived on Sunday evening by special aircraft at the Halim Perdanakusuma Airport accompanied by, among others, Minister of Higher Education Datuk Mustafa Mohamed, Religious Adviser to the Prime Minister Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Abdullah Md Zin and Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim.