

**YABhg Tun Mahathir Mohamad's Speech on launching of the 1Billion
Donation Campaign for Rebuilding Gaza (1Bil4Gaza)
Saturday 24th January 2015, 9.30 am, Shaftsbury Asteria, Cyberjaya.**

1. Assalamualaikum & thank you for inviting me to this Launching of the 1Billion Donation Campaign for Rebuilding Gaza (1Bil4Gaza) organised by the Arab and International Commission to Build Gaza (AICBG), and hosted here in Malaysia by the Malaysian Society for Engineering and Technology (MySET) and the Humanitarian Malaysia Berhad (MyCARE).
2. We are here to send a message of hope and solidarity to the Palestinian people that the peace loving Ummah will never abandon them, come what may and that we will continuously offer our hand to help them whenever they are in need, offering our shoulder for them to cry on, and together with them in their struggle for liberation of Palestine.
3. Palestine is a legitimate state of the Palestinian people, including the occupied lands. Unfortunately, what is left are only the Gaza strip and the West Bank which are under the Palestinian Authority; even these are under constant treat of occupation by Israel.
4. The entire world's population know that Israel has been constantly engaging a war of attrition with Palestine, especially with Gaza, with the pretext that it was under the government of Hamas. The latest was the Ramadhan War in 2014. Most of these wars by Israel over Gaza were started with their own provocations or false accusations to justify their attack. Prior to this assault, Israel has done it more than 200 times.
5. In the last Ramadhan war alone, it was estimated that the war have displaced more than 475,000 people, with more than 2,000 killed, and 6,000 wounded. The destruction has destroyed 10,604 houses, 24 hospitals, 188 schools, and 134 mosques. In addition to that, 6 universities were either partially or completely destroyed as well.

6. I have been very vocal to 'criminalise war', and certainly this act of intended and planned destruction of the Palestinian state by Israel is one for the world to condemn. I used to say;

"All these things Israel are doing are against International law, against morality, against human rights. They are criminals in every law of the civilised world".

"But the Israeli Jews do this with impunity. They have the whole of America and Europe behind them".

"They are the chosen people of God and they are above any laws, any moral code, any human values".

7. The destruction to Gaza is massive – what is the estimated reconstruction cost from the last 2014 Ramadhan war with Israel?

8. And the international pledges made in Cairo by donor countries recently remained as lip service only. They have indeed pledged around 5.6 billion dollars.

9. Has OIC played its role in helping Palestine?

In my speech at the OIC Islamic Summit Conference in Putrajaya in 2003, I did call for the governments of all Muslim countries to close rank and have a common stand if not on all issues, at least on the Palestine issue. But until now, Muslim countries are still divided over the Palestinian issue. Hence, expecting assistance from OIC in helping Palestine and Gaza is just a dream.

10. An example of an irony of the Muslim government; while Israel bombarded Gaza, instead of aiding, the Egyptian government closed access to Rafah and cut the people of Gaza from their critical supplies.

11. It's the support and help from the ummah at large that will help the rebuilding of Gaza – for example the recent Arab & International Commission for Rebuilding of Gaza initiative – the emergency shelter for winter project with a target of USD20 million.

12. Surah Ar-Ra'd verse 11. That Allah will not change the fate of a community until the community has tried to change its fate itself. And this could probably mean the ummah as a whole, even without the governments.
13. This 1Bil4Gaza campaign is another commitment from the ummah, the public at large – to help our brothers and sisters in Gaza.
14. Malaysia has been unwavering in its support of Palestine and has never had diplomatic ties with Israel. We have officially recognised the State of Palestine by the setting up of the Palestine Embassy in Kuala Lumpur.
15. This Arab and International Commission to Rebuild Gaza (AICBG) initiative is highly commendable and for that I have given my full support by agreeing to be the Patron of this all-important initiative.
16. 1billion is not sufficient to rebuild Gaza - as opposed to the actual cost of 7.5billion - but for a start, it does show a significant commitment to help.
17. This International Conference will discuss, identify and formed various initiatives needed to help Gaza. I was informed that various Working Groups will be formed to look after several sectors such as housing and building, health, education, agriculture, economy, and infrastructure.
18. MySET as a learned professional society engaging in such an initiative is to be lauded – it is a sign that Malaysians are a caring lot. I want MySET to be as successful as MERCY which is doing well in international CSR in the medical field.
19. I hope that through MySET, our local experts like engineers, technologists and technicians could get the opportunity to be involved in this noble cause of assisting others in times of need.
20. I also hope that MySET will be able to utilise some of our own locally developed technologies and expertise to assist in the rebuilding of Gaza –

maybe in domestic water supply system, energy/electricity supply, and sewerage systems.

21. I was also informed that MyCARE, a social work NGO is partnering MySET in this noble cause. I hope that MyCARE will also be successful.

22. On top of these two organisations, I am also aware that various organisations in Malaysia are actively supporting the cause of the Palestinian such as the Perdana Global Foundation, Viva Malaysia, etc. It just shows that we Malaysians are truly friends of the Palestinians.

23. Before I end my speech, I would like to appeal to all corporate organisations and individuals to generously contribute to this noble cause.

24. I hereby with the sacred kalimah of Bismilla hirrahma nirrahim, declare the 1 Billion Donation Campaign for Rebuilding Gaza (1Bil4Gaza) OFFICIALLY launched.

May Allah help the people of Gaza and Palestine.

Palestine will be free insyaAllah.