

By : **DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB BIN TUN HAJI ABDUL RAZAK
PERDANA MENTERI MALAYSIA**

Venue : **Gaza City, Palestine**

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Title : **ACCEPTANCE SPEECH ON THE CONFERMENT OF THE HONORARY DOCTORATE
DEGREE BY ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF GAZA, PALESTINE**

BISMILLAHIR-RAHMANIR-RAHIM

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.

Dear Honourable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the name of Allah the most benevolent and the most merciful, we are gathered here as brothers and sisters in Islam.

I have travelled more than 7,500 kilometres to join you today. Along the way I passed Indonesia, home to 200 million Muslims; India and Pakistan, each home to 170 million Muslims; and of course the Gulf, home of our holiest sites.

It was powerful reminder that although distance, language and culture separate us, we are one Ummah.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed a privilege to be recognised for this degree, and on behalf of the people of Malaysia, I am honoured to accept it. For although I consider myself a friend of the people of Palestine, it is my people who reach out with offers of assistance; who give what they can to help people here; who keep Palestinian innocents in their thoughts whenever violence is done here. Their commitment can be seen in the funds and medical supplies donated to last year's solidarity mission, and in the spirits of those who travelled here to disburse them.

For many Malaysians, who could only watch from afar, last year's conflict brought a sense of helplessness; a feeling that made worse by distance. I offer my praise to Allah for his graciousness, that I may stand here before you as a humble representative of those people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you at a time of great significance for the people of Palestine, with the prospect of a unity government seemingly within reach.

I wish to state for the record my support for the "Reconciliation Plan" between Hamas and Fatah. It is my belief that only through unity can there be peace and prosperity.

This belief is strengthened by experience. Last year, Malaysia helped facilitate peace talks in the Southern Philippines, where civil war had raged for forty years, taking 120,000 lives and displacing millions more. It was through dialogue, negotiation and reconciliation that the deep roots of this conflict were upended, initiating the beginnings of peace in a region which has known only war for a lifetime.

The Peace Plan Agreement signed recently in the Philippines brought an end to the suffering and hardship which had been wrought on generations. It was a slow and difficult process – success was measured in steps, not strides. But Malaysia was proud to have played a part in bringing the two sides together, assisting the dialogue and driving forward the negotiations.

Should it be needed, we stand ready to offer you the benefit of that experience. Malaysia, always a friend of the Palestine people, is willing to help facilitate the "Reconciliation Plan" in whichever way we can.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our nation has for many years fully supported and stood firmly together with the Palestinian people in their struggle towards

a just resolution to the Palestine-Israel issue.

We believe in the right of all peoples to live in peace, security and dignity; and we hope that this right is realised for the people of Palestine soon.

That is why Malaysia has consistently called upon the world to focus its energies on resolving the Palestinian issue – whether at a regional level, or within the Organisation of Islamic Co-operation and the United Nations.

Our commitment to a peaceful resolution to this most iniquitous conflict is clear. We wish to see an independent, unified Palestine enjoying the peace and security which all the world's people deserve.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The quest for knowledge is a lifelong pursuit. It is for that reason I am pleased to announce that Malaysia is offering scholarships and placements to any qualified students from Palestine who wish study in Malaysia, both at first degree level, and particularly at the post-graduate level. It is our hope that such study will assist you in the rebuilding and development of your country.

Our faith teaches us that knowledge is the key to dignity and prosperity. To my brothers and sisters studying here, be eager to venture into the Gardens of Knowledge that Allah has bestowed upon us; to further understand His Meanings in Life, and to better serve yourselves and your beloved Palestine.

Education gives us much as individuals, but its benefit to societies is greater still. It is with this in mind that I humbly receive this Award. It is recognition of a shared spirit: the oneness of Tawheed, oneness of Brotherhood. We are but One Ummah, and we shall continue being so for eternity, Insyallah. In the Name of Allah, Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim, I accept this Honorary Degree on behalf of the Government of Malaysia, with full respect and honour, to the Islamic University of Gaza and the People of Gaza and the People of Palestine.

May Allah bless us in all our 'Amal (Good Deeds), and Grant us His Mercy.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh