

Former Prime Minister of Malaysia calls upon Nations to Rise Against Israel

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KUALA LUMPUR (July 11, 2010): Civil society must exert pressure on governments to shun hypocrisy and rise against Israel, Perdana Global Peace Organisation chairman and former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

In his address at the Breaking The Siege: In the Spirit of Rachel Corrie and Mavi Marmara international conference, Mahathir said: "We must call upon all governments not to be hypocritical and stand up to this rogue state called Israel."

He also termed Israel an "apartheid state" which must not be allowed to continue such oppressive policies.

He said the world should not allow an apartheid state to continue its oppression of Palestinians.

He said the December 2008 invasion of Gaza not only resulted in the deaths of Palestinian civilians but also an outpouring of aid which did not reduce the suffering of the people.

"The invasion saw more than 1,400 civilians, men, women and children killed, and more than 20,000 homes, schools and hospitals were destroyed," he said.

"Many countries pledged billions in aid, but the pledges were not translated into concrete action to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinians in Gaza.

"It was hypocrisy at its worst."

Later, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who closed the conference, said the government will push for an emergency special session at the United Nations General Assembly to bring up the issue of Israel.

He said Malaysia will continue to play an active role in standing up for Palestinians who are oppressed by the Israelis.

"We will demand at the UN General Assembly that action be taken against Israel," he said.

"We will send a clear message to the world that Israel cannot continue oppressing Palestinians, that Palestinians must be free from the shackles of Israel."

Other speakers at the conference related accounts of the flotilla attacks, and provided insight into the lives of Palestinians in Gaza and called for action against Israel.

They included international activist Jenny Graham and former United Nations (UN) assistant secretary general Dennis J. Halliday who were on board the MV Rachel Corrie and Michel Chossudovsky from Ottawa University.

Graham said the passengers on board were scared when they saw the Israeli commandos each carrying six weapons.

“We were regular people. We did not want to be martyrs or heroes,” she said.

Halliday described the UN’s efforts as a “tragic embarrassment at ending violence and promoting peacemaking efforts” in the region.

On May 31, Israeli commandos stormed the six-ship freedom flotilla, one of which was the MV Mavi Marmara, in international waters off the coast of Gaza Strip.

The flotilla was carrying some 10,000 tons of aid and up to 700 human rights activists to the Palestinian enclave.

Nine activists, four of whom were Turkish, were killed and dozens were injured.

The MV Rachel Corrie, which left for Gaza later, was also seized.

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