

UN to hold special session

Emergency meet to discuss Israel's military aggression in Gaza

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's call for a special United Nations session to condemn Israel over its military aggression received a boost when the UN General Assembly (UNGA) agreed to hold the session today.

The president of the current UNGA has decided to hold a special emergency session on illegal Israeli actions in Gaza following requests from Malaysia and Brazil.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is encouraged with the latest development. He has called for sanctions against Israel for conducting military aggression and invading Gaza.

"We have to include more reasons as to why a particular country should be sanctioned. It is important moral issues, such as atrocities, must also be taken into account," he said after launching the new campus of the

Institute of Foreign Relations and Diplomacy here yesterday.

Asked what kind of sanctions should be imposed against Israel, Abdullah replied: "The UN will decide."

According to officials, major elements in the draft resolution to be adopted called for unconditional ceasefire (including cessation of armed violence from Israel and the Palestine Hamas group) and opening of UN access into Gaza for humanitarian assistance.

However, any resolution adopted by the 192-member world body would not be legally binding.

Abdullah said Israel's complete withdrawal from Gaza should also be considered. He said the continuing aggression by Israel would depend on the United States.

"Israel will normally wait for any signal from the Americans. The US plays an important role and I hope they will not pose any barrier to the resolution," he said.

In his speech, the Prime Minister said the world would be a better place if ethics and morality were given due weight in the conduct of international relations.

"Perhaps the international community should include outrageous breaches of basic moral standards in the list which must be subjected to international sanctions," he said.

Later in announcing the relaunch of the Palestine Humanitarian Fund, he called on all Malaysians to contribute.

Meanwhile, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said from today and for the next three weeks, all donations collected during Friday prayers at mosques nationwide would be handed over to the State Islamic Religious Department to help the Palestinians in Gaza.

The donations will be brought to Kuala Lumpur before being handed over to the Foreign Ministry.



For the Palestinians: Abdullah making a donation to the Palestine Humanitarian Fund after launching the campus yesterday.