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MALDIVES' VISIT

# 'WE ARE OPPOSED TO DECLARATION'

Najib reiterates rejection of US' Jerusalem move



NIK IMRAN ABDULLAH

MALE

**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak reiterated Malaysia's total rejection of the move to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

He said Malaysia's position clearly remained opposed to the unilateral declaration by the United States' administration on the Jerusalem issue.

"It is a total rejection of the unilateral declaration to make Jerusalem the capital of Israel," he said at a joint press confer-

ence with Maldives President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom at the presidential office here.

Najib was on the last day of his two-day official visit to Maldives yesterday.

The prime minister also held a one-to-one meeting with the Maldives president, followed by a bilateral delegation meeting involving Malaysian and Maldivian ministers and senior officials.

On the issue of the Rohingya, Najib said he had conveyed to Abdulla Yameen that Malaysia was doing everything possible to ease the plight of Rohingya refugees.

"Our position is very clear that something positive needs to be done to ensure the injustice and persecution of Rohingya are stopped.

"They should be allowed to return to their homes," he said.

Najib said Malaysia had yet to see positive results after Myanmar shared its commitment with Malaysia to resolve the Rohingya issue.

He said Malaysia and Maldives shared a common position with respect to combating violent extremism, particularly "the evil ideology of IS (Islamic State)".

"I have explained to the (Mal-

dives) president some of the preemptive measures we have introduced in Malaysia.

"We are on top of that, but the threat is alive and is a clear and present danger to Malaysia and the rest of the world," he said.

Najib said the Maldives president had made a remark during their meeting that he considered Malaysia a model of economic development.

He said the statement was a strong vindication of what the government was doing for the country.

"(It is a) third-party validation of such importance to us, and I'd like to thank you (Maldives president) for giving us the confidence that we are on the right track," he said.

Najib said he raised the subject of cooperation in developing halal products and services, including Islamic tourism, during his meeting with the Maldives president.

"We can cooperate to export (halal products) to third countries. We can also cooperate on Islamic finance, as Malaysia is a global leader in the area."

Malaysia and Maldives signed four memoranda of understanding

(MoUs) at the president's office.

The MoU on cooperation in the field of firefighting and rescue training was signed by Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Minister Tan Sri Noh Omar and Maldives' Defence and National Security Minister Adam Shareef.

The MoU on cooperation in the field of health was signed by Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam and his Maldivian counterpart, Abdulla Nazim Ibrahim.

The MoU on the establishment of a Maldives culture centre in Malaysia was signed by Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican and Maldives' Foreign Affairs Minister Dr Mohamed Asim.

The fourth MoU, in the field of higher education, was signed by Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh and Maldives' Education Minister Dr Aishath Shiham.

Abdulla Yameen said as two peace-loving Islamic nations, "we agreed to increase our collaborative efforts to strengthen the solidarity of the Muslim ummah and promote the true values of Islam internationally.

"In particular, we discussed the situation in Palestine, as well as the dire plight of the Rohingya Muslims, and agreed to collaborate more closely on these issues," he said.

Later, at a press conference at the Velana International Airport, Hulhule, Najib said as a member of the United Nations (UN), Malaysia had the right to show its objection to the move by the US to veto the recent resolution by the UN Security Council on the issue of Jerusalem.

"We will play our role in the UN even though we are not a member of the Security Council.

"It (the veto by the US) is against the resolution by the Security Council made before."

Najib said the matter should not be decided unilaterally but through negotiations, as the rights of Palestinians should not be sidelined.

On Tuesday, Bernama reported that the UN would call for a special emergency meeting following a veto by the US against the resolution proposed by Egypt for the US to withdraw its declaration of recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak with Maldives President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom at an official lunch hosted by Abdulla at Dharubaaruge yesterday. Also present are the prime minister's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, and First Lady Fathimath Ibrahim. BERNAMA PIC