



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY YAB TUN DR. MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD
PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA**

**AT THE 9TH ANNUAL GRAND IFTAR
WITH THE PALESTINIAN COMMUNITY IN MALAYSIA**

**ON 22 MAY 2019 (WEDNESDAY), 6.00PM - 8.00PM
DEWAN SERI ENDON, PUSPANITAPURI, PUTRAJAYA**

1. Thank you for inviting me to the **9th Annual Grand IFTAR** with the Palestinian Community in Malaysia. It is indeed a pleasure to be here at this beautiful gathering organised by the Palestinian Cultural Organisation Malaysia.
2. In Malaysia, we are blessed with peace and prosperity that allow us to fast comfortably and those who are better off have taken the opportunity to share with those who are less fortunate.
3. It is in this comfort that we are reminded of the sufferings of our Palestinian brothers and sisters. Due to that, some are unable to feel the pain of the Palestinians and regard it as a problem in a distant land. However, for most of us, the comfort we live in now amplifies the sufferings - tugging the heartstrings as we hear and watch the unimaginable horrors inflicted upon the Palestinians almost on a daily basis.
4. Most Malaysians are familiar with the sufferings of the Palestinians. We have on our part attempted to take the cause to the international platform. Our people have joined other like-minded citizens of the world to protest the cruelties of Israel. Malaysians have joined flotillas and land convoys to break the siege on Gaza as well as other protests, all aimed at reminding the international community of the plight of the Palestinians.
5. Much as these efforts have yet to bear any substantial results - they had however served as a reminder to the Israel regime and the powerful nations that prop it up that we will not be closing our eyes to the blatant injustices.
6. Neither will we be silent as we witness the hypocrisy of the powerful nations in dealing with the Palestinian plight and their continuous support for Israel's crimes against humanity.
7. I have said it many times before. If there is ever a chance for world peace to be achieved, the Palestinian issue needs to be resolved. To resolve it, the international community must find a solution to the displaced Palestinians, the return of their land which had been illegally taken by Israelis, put an end to the genocidal Israeli military occupation of Palestinian land and allowing the return of Palestinians to their land.
8. For as long as the issue is not resolved and the Palestinians are not given justice, the Middle-East will forever be in conflict, giving birth to terrorism and militancy, and spreading to the rest of the world.
9. The terrorism and militancy are direct results of the State terrorism committed by Israel, a matter conveniently ignored or brushed aside by the powerful Western nations.
10. Not only do they ignore it, they even provide weapons and legitimacy for the Israeli regime to commit genocidal acts and crimes of aggression and against humanity.
11. That is the truth, an inconvenient truth to the nations that protect, support and legitimise Israel.

12. There is nothing ambiguous or vague about the plight of the Palestinians. It is a story about a once free people who have lost their land forcibly through a brutal occupation and was committed blatantly for the whole world to see.
13. For decades, since the colonialists from the West conveniently passed their “baggage” to Palestine, Palestinians had not had a single day of respite. Instead of being grateful for being given an opportunity to lead a life without persecution and pogroms as they had suffered in Europe, the Israelis decided to persecute Palestinians, whose land they had occupied illegally.
14. Since then too, the persecution ranged from apartheid, genocide, terrorism, killings, murders to land grab and these crimes are still being pursued by the Israelis and attempts by any nation to raise issue with it will result in being labelled anti-Semitic, a strong reason for the Western countries to impose sanctions and other punitive measures on those who speak up against Israel.
15. Today too, the very nations that created the monstrosity called Israel, are still up to their mischief, rewarding Israel with Jerusalem by declaring it Israel’s capital.
16. Israel keeps violating the international laws and human rights daily. Israeli settlements are built every day and Palestinians are denied access to their own lands.
17. Nations that insist on being the defenders of human rights seemed helpless or intentionally being oblivious to Israel’s murderous rampage and remain silent over widespread believe of Israel’s nuclear arsenal and weapons of mass destruction.
18. Therefore, standing up for Palestine is a moral obligation and Malaysia will continue to condemn Israel for its aggression and cruelties on Palestinians.
19. I am happy to note that the Palestinian Cultural Organisation Malaysia or as a Palestinian-Malaysian NGO, has been committed to the struggle for a free Palestine. Today, it plays a significant role in building cross-cultural understanding between Palestine and Malaysia, raising awareness about the Palestinian issue and reaching out to Malaysian officials and political parties to mobilise political support for Palestinian rights.
20. This collaboration is testimony of the unity of purpose shared between Malaysians and Palestinians.
21. I would also like to take this opportunity to announce that the Government has decided to offer scholarships through the Palestinian Cultural Organisation Malaysia for Palestinian students to pursue bachelor, masters, and PhD courses in 12 established Malaysian universities.
22. To all Palestinian students who are selected, congratulations and all the best in your studies.
23. Before I conclude, I wish to re-affirm Malaysia’s commitment to the Palestinian cause. We have and will always stand by you. And we will not keep quiet for as long as we see the atrocities and injustices committed by the Israeli regime.
24. Ramadan Kareem & Selamat berbuka puasa.

Thank you.