

Anwar says Palestine fund now stands at RM81m but warns against anyone taking advantage of conflict

By Mandy Leong - October 19, 2023 @ 5:03pm

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has announced that the Humanitarian Trust Fund for the People of Palestine (AAKRP) has successfully amassed RM 81 million, but warned fundraisers for the same cause not to take advantage.

Anwar alluded to prior situations where funds were not transparently managed and urged the need for accountability in such circumstances.

"Do not take this opportunity to construct lavish mansions for ourselves or spend excessively on beautifying our offices when this fund is meant for humanitarian assistance," he said when attending the presentation ceremony for the AAKRP fund in Putrajaya today.

Anwar gave his assurances that AAKRP, managed by the Foreign Ministry, would solely be used to support the Palestinian cause.

"We will ensure the fund is directly channelled towards medical aid, food, drink, and basic necessities to Gaza, for the Palestinian people who are killed or injured.

"Together with the Foreign Ministry, we will make sure that the funds are disbursed for humanitarian aid purposes.

"I express profound gratitude to those who have given what they can. I would also like to remind Malaysians, yes, donate, but please use the right source," he said.

Meanwhile, Anwar said Malaysia was not contemplating sending military aid to Gaza.

"Some insist we should send our armed forces, but that is not what we will consider for now.

"I do not think we should provoke this into a discussion. Our focus right now is on humanitarian assistance," he said.

Anwar also warned that the Palestinian issue should not be exploited for political gain.

"It is not an issue of race, rights, or historical battles. It is about people being dispossessed; people are dying. Their land, their property, and their dignity are being taken away from them.

"People have the right to differ, but they do not have the right to deny the basic rights of anyone. And this is happening with impunity, and to me, this is shocking.

"Given the authority, I would do whatever I can in our limited capacity to help assist and even the plight of our Palestinian brothers and sisters," he said.

It has been more than a week since Israel launched an extensive bombardment of Gaza in response to cross-border attacks by Hamas on Oct 7, resulting in the deaths of thousands, with the majority being Palestinian civilians, including women and children.