

October 1973. In his statement, commenting on the outbreak of the war, Tun Razak pointed out that the root cause of the renewed fighting was the illegal occupation by Israel of Arab lands, and her continued intransigence in blocking all peaceful efforts to bring about a settlement in accordance with UN resolutions.²⁴

The war received wide coverage in Malaysian dailies, thus aroused public awareness on the issue. The Middle East Graduates Association of Malaysia condemned Israel, and declared support for the Arab people. Its president Datuk Wan Abdul Kadir, who was also the Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, urged all Muslims to support Egypt and Syria in the war.

The Malaysian government under Tun Hussein also consistently and firmly believed that any solution to the problem of the Middle East had to take into account the rights of the concerned Arab state to regain their lost territories. It further insisted that no solution in the Middle East could be achieved without full consideration to the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people, and their inalienable rights to return to their homes and properties, and to achieve self-determination, national independence and sovereignty.²⁵

For example, at the 32nd Session of the UN General Assembly in New York, on September 30, 1977, the Prime Minister's speech contained an expression of regret for the failure of the UN to bring an effective solution to the Palestinian problem. Tun Hussein stressed his government's belief that "there will never be any peace and stability in the Middle East until Israel withdrawn from all the lands it took from Arab countries, and until it agrees to the establishment of a homeland for the Palestinians".²⁶ Tun Hussein furthermore asserted Malaysia's support for the convening of the Geneva Conference to resolve the problems in the Middle East. As the Palestinians are also affected, Malaysia viewed the presence of

24. Foreign Affairs Malaysia, December 1973, pg. 48

25. Shanti Nair, *Islam in Malaysian Foreign Policy*, London: Routledge, 1997, pg. 72

26. Foreign Affairs Malaysia, December 1977, pg. 69