

Painful in Palestine even for a veteran doctor

KUALA LUMPUR: In his 25 years as a medical volunteer and a doctor, Dr Yahaya Abu Ahmad has seen a lot – but his experience in war-torn Palestine was among the worst he has encountered.

Especially saddening, he said, was the suffering forced upon children.

“My heart really went out to this 10-year-old girl who lost her right arm and left leg. The look of pure devastation just broke my heart as she told my interpreter that she was an invalid,” he recollected, while relating his personal account as a voluntary medical doctor with the Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS) at its headquarters in Ampang yesterday.

Dr Yahaya, the head of the health centre at Universiti Putra Malaysia, and relief officer Nasir Khan Abdul Rahman left for Rafah, Egypt, on Jan 13 and managed to enter Gaza a week later before proceeding to Khan Younis to assist the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PCRS) there.

“Basically, our mission was divid-



Medical mission: Dr Yahaya attending to one of the war victims at Gaza Hospital

ed into a few phases – starting with the emergency phase whereby the team supplied emergency medical and relief items for 1,000 families such as blankets, sleeping bags and

food items.”

The second phase was focused on rehabilitation and medical assistance. In this phase, medical equipment worth RM1.5mil was supplied

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to those affected by the war.

“Due to the nature of the injuries caused by bomb attacks, the lives of the victims will be permanently changed from the medical, mental and livelihood aspects. These are usually irreversible,” he said,

“That was why the supplies of prosthetic limbs, physiotherapy, prosthetic fittings and continuous medical support are deemed very

necessary in helping them to rebuild their lives,” he added.

The MRCS is planning to deploy a second medical team consisting of two doctors and three medical assistants who will be assigned to Al Quds PCRS hospital in Khan Younis for two weeks.

The mission is estimated to cost around RM50,000.

“We really need highly experienced people to handle the very challenging situation in the war-torn country which is very different from that in normal hospitals,” he said.

Also present at the event was the national chairman of MRCS Tengku Tan Sri Shahiman Tengku Sulaiman who received a cheque from Permai Jaya Lifestyle executive chairman Datuk Mohd Zain Zakaria to the MRCS International Relief Fund. MRCS appeals to all generous Malaysians to donate to the MRCS International Relief Fund by banking in the donations to Maybank account number 514422102657 or call 03-4257 8122 to make donations.