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## **Kula: Our tardiness in joining ICC a bane**



Malaysia's tardiness in signing up to join the International Criminal Court (ICC) hinders the country's championing of justice for favoured causes, one of which is Palestinian rights.

Secretary of Parliamentarians for Global Action, Malaysian chapter, M Kulasegaran told a one-day seminar in Kuala Lumpur on international rule of law and the protection of civilians that the Malaysian Parliament had moved motions that had wanted the ICC to act, but ironically, the government itself was chary of signing up with the ICC.

"The Malaysian Parliament on June 7, 2010 adopted 15 motions in the aftermath of Israel's attack on the fleet of ships carrying humanitarian aid bound for Gaza," recalled the MP for Ipoh Barat, a four-term member of the Lower House.

Statute, using technicalities as a reason, which impedes its credibility as a moral voice," said Kulasegaran.

He said that the moral voice had gained stature from the country's election to a rotating seat of the Security Council and from being the current chair of Asean.

Kulasegaran said Malaysia had in 2011 expressed an intent to sign up with the ICC, but held back on the grounds that issues of genocide and crimes against humanity needed to be clarified and absorbed into domestic laws before enlisting with the ICC.

Kulasegaran observed that two nations, Philippines and Maldives, which had also in 2011 expressed interest to join the ICC actually signed up with the court, leaving Malaysia marooned on technicalities rather swimming with the currents that had brought 123 countries to accession with the court.

In his keynote address to the seminar, Justice Raul Cano Pangalangan of the Philippines, newly-elected to the ICC, referred to the growing moral consensus in the comity of nations on the necessity of preventing genocide and protecting civilians but he said he perceived a resistance among nations to sign up to "something strange".

Referring to the Philippines' experience, he said that having signed up four

years ago with the ICC, there has yet to be a move among the swarm of restive groups in his country to report the country to the ICC for crimes against humanity.

He noted that the Philippine experience of difficulty in enforcing claims for restitution by victims of human rights violations under the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos (1965-1986) had played a part in propelling the country towards ICC membership.