

Headline **Dr M champions anti-war movement**  
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# Dr M champions anti-war movement

## Former PM says war should be criminalised

**DARSHINI KANDASAMY**

WHY is it that the murder of one man is considered a criminal act whereas the killing of hundreds of thousands of innocent people committed in wars, is not considered so?

That was the question posed by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday during a press conference to highlight the upcoming War Criminal Conference and Exhibition at Putra World Trade Centre from Oct 28 - 31.

The conference, jointly organised by Perdana Global Peace Organisation (PGPO) and Kuala Lumpur Foundation to Criminalise War (KLFCW), aims to expose the atrocities and injustices of war - in hopes that people will realise that war is not a solution, but a crime.

This is a matter close to the heart of the former Prime Minister, who has lived through the Japanese Occupation and seen the ugliness of war for himself. He recalled being horrified by the case of a British soldier who was bayoneted to death by Japanese soldiers and kicked into the Kedah river.

Citing the abolishment of slavery as an example, Dr Mahathir, keynote speaker at the conference, expressed belief that war can be eradicated one day even if it takes years to accomplish.

"Just because I cannot see the result does not mean I must stop

trying. I would like to make people realise war is about killing and wounding a lot of people. With every one person killed, probably four others are critically wounded, losing limbs and ending up crippled for the rest of their lives."

He said it was not fair to take away the life and security of innocent people in another country in the interest of security in your own country.

"We hope this message will be carried throughout this country and internationally. We have built up a network around the world in our efforts to make war a crime."

Until such a time, Dr Mahathir said: "We are not civilised. If we think killing people is the way to solve problems, then we are not civilised."

In condemning the war on Iraq, Dr Mahathir stressed that he was not trying to attack the Western powers - but Western powers seem to be breaking the peace in the interest of their own security.

He stressed that people who deliberately go to war should be regarded as criminals and be taken to court.

More often than not, he said, if such people were taken to court - it would be in a court set up by the 'winners' to punish the 'losers'. He pointed out this was not just - as the victor may not be the righteous but

often the country with more power, technology and money.

Dr Mahathir also said war was an excuse for certain countries to sustain its weapons development industry in a "military industrial complex" which has become a monster.

The conference has an impressive lineup of speakers and will feature testimonies from several Iraqi torture victims so that their stories can be heard. It will also feature an

exhibition to show the brutality and inhumanity of war.

"It may take years but we need to make a start." Dr Mahathir said this was where the media, NGOs and the internet could spread the message and create awareness.

When asked what he sees as an alternative to war Dr Mahathir cited former US president Richard Nixon's 'Ping Pong diplomacy' - where matters are resolved through negotiations.

He said money saved from stopping weapons production could be channelled to better use - such as HIV research or the eradication of poverty.

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