

No place for war criminals: Wars are nothing more than “legitimised terror.”

Statement by Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, former PM of Malaysia

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No place for war criminals

Stories by SHAHANAAZ HABIB and LISA GOH



Tough stand: Participants and guests listening to Dr Mahathir speaking at the conference in Kuala Lumpur.

KUALA LUMPUR: People should use their power and make leaders found guilty by the War Crimes Tribunal “unwelcome wherever they go”, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

“They (the war criminals) should be literally hounded,” the former prime minister said in his keynote address at the three-day Expose War Crimes – Criminalise War Conference here yesterday.

“They should have their full frontal and profile pictures put up everywhere as war criminals. And historians should always refer to them as war criminals in history books.”

He said all leaders, especially those from powerful nations, wanted to go down in history as great men – identified with great deeds and not as war criminals.

“History should remember (British Prime Minister Tony) Blair and (US President George W.) Bush as the Killers of Children or as the Lying Prime Minister and President. What Blair and Bush have done is worse than what Saddam (Hussein) had done,” he added.

He proposed the setting up of a permanent tribunal to criminalise war, which would be empowered by victims of aggression and right-minded people, to hear charges levelled at war-mongers, leaders and governments of aggressor nations to determine their innocence or guilt.

He said it should be made up of international jurists of repute with no personal or national interest in matters referred to them so that their judgments would be based on evidence and not sentiment.

Admitting that the tribunal might not have the power to enforce its decisions because the people on trial might be too powerful, he said: “We should find ways and forms of

punishments that are within our capacity.”

“The jurists should have no qualms about the unorthodox laws they should draft or the kind of punishment they should prescribe.”

Wars, Dr Mahathir pointed out, are nothing more than “legitimised terror.”

“Wars are crimes against humanity. The terror caused by powerful countries with their rockets, missiles and bombs cannot be said to be less than that caused by a suicide bomber. Powerful countries are much more terrorists than the suicide bombers,” he said.

Dr Mahathir noted that while the suicide pilots in the Sept 11, 2001, terror attack on the United States killed 3,000 people, 600,000 Afghans and Iraqis have been killed and continue to be killed by their “powerful oppressors” (the West).

“Sending in more troops simply creates more targets,” he added.

Unless war is made illegal, he said, the whole world would have to endure an endless state of war between the powerful and the weak.

Later, during a question-and-answer session, Dr Mahathir said he had doubts that the collapse of the World Trade Centre in New York was actually caused by terrorists crashing planes into the towers.

He said the buildings had collapsed in an orderly manner with such military precision that it all seemed well planned.

“I can believe that they (the United States) would kill 3,000 of their own to have an excuse to kill 650,000 Iraqis. These are the kind of people we are dealing with. Please don’t think this is fiction.”

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