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Mahathir-Gulf

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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 1 (Bernama) -- Malaysians, particularly the Muslims, should not take sides in the on-going Gulf war, involving the United States-led allied forces and Iraq, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Muslims should not back only one group in a conflict between Muslims, he added. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are among the Islamic countries in the allied coalition forces.

+If the Muslims are fighting among themselves, we should not take sides,+ he told newsmen after visiting the Bird Park in Taman Tasik Perdana here.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who commented on PAS's move to send volunteers to help Iraq, said: +It is not for us to determine who is right or wrong in this conflict.+

PAS has said that the volunteers would help Iraqi war victims in medical and other non-military relief work. It considered the action a +jihad+ (Holy War) provided under Islam, to oppose the United States and allied forces in the Gulf war. -- more

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Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said: +I do not see it as a jihad when an Islamic country attacks another Islamic country. This is not jihad.

+If we embark on a jihad in this matter, it will only cause more Muslims to die. But if they are willing to go because they believe that by taking sides they can solve the problem, it is their belief.+

He reiterated that the best solution to the war was through talks and Malaysia would continue to appeal, push and seek for talks to resolve the crisis.

He also stressed that the government's call for a review of the United Nations Resolution 678, which approved the use of military force to evict Iraq from Kuwait, did not reflect any change in its stand.

The resolution, for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, did not call for Iraq's destruction, he said.

He added that Malaysia would take part in and support international conferences to resolve the crisis through talks. -- Bernama

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