

# Dr M: We must always assist one another

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SUNGAI PETANI, Mon. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded the people of the importance of helping one another and extending help to those in need.

It was partly because of this desire to help that Malaysia decided to send its troops to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Dr Mahathir said adding that the decision was also based on humanitarian grounds.

He said: "We need to help those who are suppressed and victimised.

"Today maybe their turn, maybe one day it will be ours ... and certainly when this happens to us we will also need help from others."

Dr Mahathir advised Malaysians not to be carried away by the prevailing peace enjoyed by the nation. One should not take the peace for granted, he added.

"We must not believe that we will always be safe ... there will be a day that we may not feel so," he said.

The Prime Minister said during the past 10 days, the country went through a painful experience following the collapse of Block A of the Highland Towers in Hulu Klang.

When the incident occurred, many people were trapped and many countries offered to help save our people, without being asked, he said.

The Prime Minister said: "We know they (the foreign

rescuers) are working relentlessly day and night to save our people.

"Therefore we should understand that helping one another is very important ... one day we help others, maybe tomorrow they help us.

"We can never expect to be safe all the time although the country is safe now as it does not face major dangers, no war...not attacked by anybody...no civil war..."

Dr Mahathir said this at the sending-off ceremony for 320 soldiers bound for Bosnia-Herzegovina at the Royal Third Armoured Reg-

iment at Kem Lapangan Terbang here.

Also present were his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, Penang Chief Minister Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Deputy Defence Minister Wan Abu Bakar Wan Mohamad, Armed Forces Chief Jen Tan Sri Abdul Rahman Abdul Hamid and Army Chief Jen Tan Sri Borhan Ahmad.

The troops would leave for Split in Croatia at 11pm from the Bayan Lepas International Airport in Penang.

Dr Mahathir added the assistance extended to the Bosnians was based on hu-

manitarian grounds.

"We extended the help to the Bosnians although we are aware of the imminent dangers. We are aware of our obligation to help those in need regardless of their religious background."

Dr Mahathir said: "We may not be that strong to help them (Bosnians), but we can at least offer some assistance and we hope other parties will render similar assistance to the Bosnians."

He said the suppression of the Bosnians was unthinkable because they were not permitted to defend them-

selves as they were not allowed to be armed for self-defence.

"The other nations should allow the Bosnians to defend themselves but the strong nations are preventing the Bosnians from doing so.

"However, they are allowing the Serbs to continue their rampage of slaughtering and rape.

"This is a gross injustice which is unacceptable to the world community. The superpowers are acting only in their own interest.

"That's the reason why we should not trust anybody to provide protection for us. We should not believe in making pacts with strong nations that they will help us when we are under attack."

Dr Mahathir said the people must be prepared and ever ready to defend the nation.

Dr Mahathir thanked the soldiers for their willingness to serve in the army and to serve in other countries.

"In Malaysia, no one is forced to join the army unlike some other countries where it is a compulsory service for every citizen.

"We should be thankful that Malaysians are still willing to serve in the army to defend the country.

"The people are proud of our soldiers for their willingness to serve. Because of them, Malaysians can stand tall among the other people of other countries."

Dr Mahathir advised the soldiers not to expose themselves to any unnecessary dangers while abroad.