

Be ready to use force: PM

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Resolutions must be enforced

KUALA LUMPUR: The tragedy in Bosnia-Herzegovina can only be ended with political and diplomatic action backed by the use of force when necessary, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"We must be clear on one thing. No amount of humanitarian action is going to put an end to the tragedy in Bosnia," the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir said this in his keynote address at the two-day International Parliamentary Conference on Bosnia-Herzegovina at the Putra World Trade Centre yesterday.

Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic was also present at the conference along with 180 parliamentarians from 30 countries.

Dr Mahathir said the UN Security Council must now demand and be prepared to back its demand by use of force, when necessary, to make the aggressors of the state comply with three critical requirements.

They are:

● THE siege of Sarajevo must be lifted by silencing or removing the

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Serbs' big guns from round the city;

● ALL concerned parties must be made to permit, by force if necessary, the unhindered flow of humanitarian assistance; and

● TUZLA Airport must be opened to enable food, medicine and other essentials to reach surrounding major towns.

Dr Mahathir said these actions were necessary to save innocent lives during harsh winter.

He also noted the need for the international community to exert pressure on the council to implement the various resolutions which it had passed.

"As an example, despite systematic and widespread obstruction to the delivery of international humanitarian assistance, there has been no effort to enforce Resolution 770 which provides for the use of all necessary means.

"(The) Security Council Resolution 836 created 'safe areas' but relentless military actions by the Serbs have instead turned these into areas under siege," he said.

Dr Mahathir also called on the

world's governments to urge the council to re-examine the Geneva process.

"Seize the initiative to convene a new international conference on Bosnia-Herzegovina ... perhaps the successful international conference on Cambodia could serve as a model."

He added it was pointless to have a second or third London Conference unless the principles adopted in the first were implemented.

(The first London Conference had pledged, among others, that it would not recognise any advantage gained by force or the creation of facts.)

On Bosnia, Dr Mahathir said, despite being under assault for nearly two years and long after the Western experts had written it off, the republic is still alive.

"We cannot and should not forget Bosnia-Herzegovina. If we accept aggression and violence by strong neighbours as legitimate, then many of us will suffer the same fate."

Therefore, he said it was essential that the right of a nation to exist be sacred and must be protected.

"If we allow the law of the jungle to apply (and) allow the strongest to determine the fate of the weakest, if we allow Bosnia-Herzegovina to be obliterated, then there will be no security for us."

Dr Mahathir also chided the superpowers, especially members of the Security Council, which were reluctant to play a direct role to end the conflict.

On the threatened air strikes against Serbs' position, he said the Americans were blaming the British and the French for preventing it.

"However, some very highly placed British and French sources have told me that it is the United States which is against the military action.

"I frankly do not know whom to believe. I suspect neither the Americans nor the Europeans care enough to act. They do not wish to risk the lives of their boys for something that is not very important for their well-being," he said.

If such was the case, Dr Mahathir said, the Bosnians should then be allowed to defend themselves but unfortunately they were prevented from doing so.