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Mahathir-Canada

M'SIA SEEKS CONDEMNATION OF CANADA'S TREATMENT OF ITS NATIVE

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 14 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Malaysia will now seek a condemnation of Canada's treatment of its native population.

He said Canada's Red Indians had for years been asking for the return of their land but their demands had been ignored.

"They (Canada) had oppressed the Red Indians for tens of years, hundreds of years (and) we never condemned them before," he told a news conference after addressing a mammoth gathering of the people at Padang AU2, Taman Keramat, near here.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on a Reuters report quoting Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy as saying that his country would seek the British Commonwealth's condemnation of Malaysia's imprisonment of Canadian journalist Murray Hiebert.

Hiebert, Malaysian bureau chief of the Hong Kong-based Far Eastern Economic Review, was taken to prison on Saturday after the Court of Appeal upheld an earlier conviction for contempt of court.

The prime minister said Malaysia had not protested when a group of its citizens were wrongly arrested by Canadian authorities recently.

"Our citizens had gone to Canada recently and they (Canadian authorities) arrested them at the airport...held them and did many things to them but we didn't protest," he said.

Asked if Malaysia feared that the Commonwealth Law Conference, currently taking place in this country, would be turned into a platform to criticise Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said:

"It's okay, they can hit out at us. The important thing is that we manage the affairs of this country in an efficient and smart manner and we bring progress to our country.

"If they want to hit us, want to criticise us, that's their business."

-- BERNAMA

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