

Mahathir tells of call to kill him on Internet

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He says this is why govt is against press freedom

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, citing a message posted on the Internet calling for his death, said such abuse provided enough reason to denounce press freedom.

He said the message, shown to him earlier, provides all the reason for the government to consider reviewing deterrent media laws, particularly to curb abuse of the Internet.

"I was just shown a message from the Internet telling people to kill me, that my blood is halal because I am unIslamic and that I had ridiculed Prophet Muhammad.

"Actually, I don't know when I did that," he said after opening the 2nd General Conference of the Federation of Universities of the Islamic World and the International Islamic University Malaysia campus in Gombak today.

"Next, of course, they will tell people to throw bombs. This is press freedom.

"Press freedom means you do anything you like, you tell lies, you abuse people, you tell people to kill each other.

"That's press freedom. We don't like that kind of press freedom."

Mahathir had yesterday touched on the need to review the Printing Presses and Publications Act with the plan to increase penalties to make such laws more relevant and effective in curbing the

spread of lies.

He acknowledged the Act was unable to tackle the widespread use of the Internet to spread harmful information, and that the source was difficult to trace.

He also said any change to the Act will not point towards unlimited press freedom, like in other "so-called liberal countries where the press tells lies, fabricate stories and provoke people".