

Reject religious extremism, says Christian group

KUALA LUMPUR: The National Evangelical Christian Fellowship Malaysia has called for the rejection of religious extremism in the country and instead hold dialogues with genuine religious groups.

NECF said these groups must work with the Government to defend the country's rich religious and ethnic diversity and share crucial information, expertise and manpower.

In the Malaysian context, religious extremism had a significant bearing on its multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society, it said.

"What happened in the United States should give us a new urgency and perspective in evaluating the radical religious movements? which sow the seeds of religious militancy in the country.

"All of us must share and bear the responsibility to strengthen the understanding not only between Christians and Muslims but among peoples of all faiths and in the nation," it added in a statement yesterday.

The NECF said it welcomed the stand taken by the Government as expressed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the advice by the National Fatwa

Council chairman Datuk Dr Ismail Ibrahim on Tuesday.

It said terrorism should not be equated with religious conflict, though it might have radical religious interest,

"Therefore, any form of extremism or terrorism should not be coloured with ethnicity and religion. At the same time we must also acknowledge that the global struggle against terrorism is not a conflict with Islam.

"The terrorist attacks are premeditated murder and torture of human life, horrendous damage to property and suffering to society."

Dr Mahathir had said that Malaysia would support US efforts to track down the terrorists responsible for the attack on the United States but that any action beyond hunting the terrorists needed further review and justification.

Dr Ismail advised Muslims to stay away from the conflicts of other nations and not to get caught up by their calls for a holy war. "No one has declared war against Muslims," he said.

The NECF said the Christian community's prayer was that any response to the recent attacks in the US should be redemptive in nature, not destructive.