

Backing for UN peace missions

We can afford it, says Dr Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — Malaysia will continue sending troops on United Nations peacekeeping missions as long as the country remains peaceful and progressive, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said Malaysia has been able to give its support in the past because it could afford it.

“That’s why development in the country is important, otherwise we would be limited to giving sympathy,” he said when launching a book on Malaysia’s participation in the UN mission in Bosnia Herzegovina.

The 171-page book, titled *Malbat & Malcon di Bosnia Herzegovina — Imbasan Kembali* (Malbat & Malcon in Bosnia Herzegovina — In Reflection), was published by the army headquarters.

Written by Kol Oseman Chik, it carries photographs and articles about the Malaysia Battalion (Malbatt) and Malaysia Contingent (Malcon) in the peacekeeping mission from 1993 to 1998.

Dr Mahathir said if Malaysia was developed, it would earn the respect of the world and be able to lend a helping hand to those who were oppressed.

“There are many Muslim nations which are oppressed but can’t do anything about it. We want to offer our help,” he said.

He said while some people accused the Government of committing injustices, they need only look to countries like Bosnia to see what true injustice was.

In Bosnia, he said more than 200,000 Muslim civilians were killed in the genocide and many women raped.

He added that Malaysia did not hesitate to send troops when the UN decided to hold a peacekeeping mission, and when the UN stopped funding, it decided to finance its own troops.

Dr Mahathir thanked the armed forces for carrying out their duties professionally and in accordance with the law.

He also thanked them for their support in the Sarawak election which was won by the Barisan Nasional yesterday.