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No plans to become OIC secretary-general

DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he had no plans to become the secretary-general of the Organisation Of Islamic Conference after his retirement in October.

"No, no, I'm not going to take up any post, anywhere. But if I can be of any use with my views, I am willing to give them ... that's all," he said.

The Prime Minister, who is also Umno president, was asked if he would consider becoming the OIC's next secretary-general at a Press conference at the end of the 54th Umno general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre.

There have been calls from many OIC members, including those from West Asia, for Dr Mahathir to play a constructive role in uniting the Muslim coalition after his retirement.

Asked of his message to the international media, which has been equally interested in the general assembly, Dr Mahathir said:

"My message is simple - just report the truth. Because you have your own pre-conceived ideas and you want to justify the wrong things that you have said, you are prepared to tell lies.

"For example, when I went to the supermarket, they saw me, took pictures and yet reported in the Press that people were frightened to meet me. My God! How many prime ministers and presidents go shopping over the weekend, driving their own cars?" he retorted.

Asked to comment on a foreign wire report which described his lectures and speeches as something which could only be understood by the older generation, Dr Mahathir said such negative reports in the past had always been proven wrong.

"They should go back to their own reports of past years and see whether they have ever reported anything about us that turned out to be correct.

"They always predict Malaysia is going to have a racial explosion although it appears to be harmonious now, but underneath it is not. This is their kind of reporting."

Dr Mahathir was also asked if he got his inspiration for the presidential address from the book *The International Jews* which reportedly found its way to the assembly.

"I read it years ago, but it has not affected my thinking. But what actually happened has affected my thinking. What happened was that land belonging to the Arabs was taken by the Europeans and given to the Jews to form the State of Israel.

"I draw my own conclusions. I don't need the book to tell me what is right and what is wrong," he said.

Asked why the book was being distributed at the assembly, he said this was beyond his control.

"I don't know. I'm not responsible for the distribution. If people want to publish and distribute it, it is their business.

"People often talk about free speech, but when they see something they don't like, they want us to show restraint," he added.