

**Mugabe, Bashir to visit  
Malaysiakini.com  
June 12, 2011**

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir, who is wanted by the International Criminal Court, are to visit Malaysia for an economic gathering, a minister said Sunday.

Kohilan Pillay, deputy foreign minister, told AFP that Mugabe and Bashir will be among the seven African leaders who will participate in the Langkawi International Dialogue from June 19 to 21.

"Leaders of the African countries will present their views on how to bolster trade, economic and political ties at the annual meeting," he said.

The African leaders will be hosted by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak who will address the issue of socio-economic development.

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, a close friend of Mugabe (above), will deliver a keynote address at the meeting held in the new administrative capital of Putrajaya, just south of the capital Kuala Lumpur.

Mahathir and Mugabe share a love of anti-Western rhetoric in defence of the developing world, but while Mahathir had steered his Southeast Asian country from the economic backwaters to the mainstream of Asian development, Zimbabwe's economy is facing a severe economic crisis.

Mahathir stepped down as prime minister in 2003 but Mugabe, 87, who has ruled Zimbabwe since independence in 1980, remains in power.

Bashir, the first sitting head of state to be targeted by an ICC warrant, faces charges of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sudan's western region of Darfur.

The warrants have hampered Bashir's movements outside Sudan. ICC statutes dictate any member country should arrest him if he visits but Malaysia is not a party to the ICC.

Chief prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo accuses Bashir of personally instructing his forces to annihilate the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa ethnic groups.

About 300,000 people have died since conflict broke out in Darfur in 2003, when non-Arab rebels took up arms against the Arab-dominated government in Khartoum for a greater share of resources and power, according to UN figures.

Sudan's government says 10,000 have been killed.

- AFP