

Dr M confirms he was in Malaysia during Memali
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Former PM Dr Mahathir Mohamad has confirmed that he was in Malaysia at the time of the bloody Memali crackdown in 1985 but stressed that the incident took place under his then deputy Musa Hitam's watch.

He said it was "unbecoming" for Musa to try in retrospect to pass the responsibility of the incident that cost the lives of 14 civilians and four policemen to him.

"The issue with regards to me not being in Malaysia when the incident occurred was not spread by me.

"I did not mention this at all in my book. What is publicly known is that Musa Hitam was the home minister and deputy prime minister at that time.

"The inspector-general of police discussed and reported to him as the home minister.

"The home minister is also involved in making the decision on actions that needed to be taken.

"It is surely unbecoming if when things were going well, only then one admits to the responsibility," he said in his blog today.

'I can't recall...'

He is referring to Musa's claim on April 4 that the latter was "not directly involved" in the fatal operations.

Musa, who was speaking as a panellist at a forum hosted by the Kelantan government, added that he had urged Mahathir not to leave the country following the incident on Nov 19, 1985.

"I cannot recall Musa Hitam coming up to me to ask me not to go to Beijing but he was, with many others, at the airport, to wish me well on my trip to China.

"Even at that time I cannot recall if he (Musa) had advised me against going abroad," Mahathir wrote on his blog.

However, he maintained that he had appointed Musa as acting prime minister at the time.

"I was very confident in the ability of the deputy prime minister to handle the situation that I appointed him as acting prime minister," wrote Mahathir.

During the controversial operations, a large police force surrounded the house of PAS leader Ibrahim (Libya) Mahmood to arrest him under the Internal Security Act (ISA), claiming he was heading a "deviant" sect.

"There were no lengthy negotiations with the besieged and by noon 14 men, including Ibrahim Libya, lay dead.

"Four police personnel also died, apparently as a result of friendly fire and several of the survivors were arrested under the ISA," wrote Suaram adviser Kua Kia Soong of the "massacre" in a recent commentary.

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