

Mahathir: Some fatwa need to be reviewed

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Some fatwa (religious edicts) need to be reviewed to suit the times because they are no longer relevant today, said former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamed.

“I am talking about fatwa in general. Some fatwa were issued at a particular time, but then we find these no longer relevant today. Therefore, although some fatwa should be accepted, we should also review whether these are suitable today.

“For example, portraits. Portraits used to be forbidden because people tended to idolise the pictures. However, we cannot avoid having portraits anymore because of the prevalence of photography.

“The important thing is that we don’t worship the portrait. So, the old fatwa cannot be carried out today,” Mahathir said.

He said this when asked to comment on the challenge by Sisters in Islam (SIS) against a Selangor state fatwa that declared the NGO “deviant”.

Mahathir further explained that fatwa are needed to handle the challenges faced by Muslims nowadays.

However, he said that fatwa should only be issued after a proper research and debate, accompanied with knowledge, while giving appropriate consideration to the realities of modern life.

He said that although a fatwa may change, it does not mean that there are changes to the content of the Quran.

What he worries about is the misinterpretation of the meaning of the Quran, and therefore not in line with the present realities.

“We cannot change the Quran. We do not need to change the Quran. Quran is not wrong - it is perfect, but interpretation can be wrong or not completely correct and past the time of relevance, not able to overcome new ideas and realities,” Mahathir added.