

Activists want Blair banned from entering M'sia
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Islamic activists on Tuesday urged Malaysia to ban former British prime minister Tony Blair from entering the country, where he is scheduled to address a business gathering this weekend.

us global diplomacy 070706 iraq war mosqueThe Malaysian Islamic NGOs Consultation Council, a coalition representing 26 Islamic groups, said they opposed Blair's presence in Kuala Lumpur because of his role in the 2003 United States-led invasion of Iraq.

"We should not invite and hear him. He should not be allowed to come into Malaysia," Mohamad Nazri Sahat, the council's chief administrative officer, told AFP, adding that a protest letter had been sent to the organisers.

"So many innocent Iraqis have died, their families are still in sorrow. If we allow him here, it is tantamount to us conspiring in this war crime."

Event organisers have insisted that Blair will come to Malaysia despite the opposition.

Invitation 'disgusting'

An online petition launched last week against Blair's visit has collected more than 3,000 signatures.

Ex-Malaysian prime minister Mahathir Mohamad, who has denounced Blair as a war criminal, said on his blog that he was "disgusted" at the invitation.

george w bush awards three friends of america tony blair john howard 140109 03Blair, Britain's prime minister from 1997 to 2007, was US president George W Bush's staunchest ally and sent British troops to Iraq in 2003.

Blair's hosts, a Singapore-based company called Success Resources, insisted that he would attend Saturday's gathering in Kuala Lumpur.

He is slated to deliver a 90-minute speech on leadership to more than 3,000 participants before leaving for Singapore for a similar talk.

"Yes, he is coming. Malaysia is still a very safe place, everyone is entitled to their opinion as long as you don't break the rule or hurt anyone," Richard Tan, the company's chief executive officer, told AFP from Singapore.

- AFP