

Wars should be declared a crime

Dr M: Western view very narrow

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KUALA LUMPUR: The media should send out the message that wars should be declared criminal acts, said Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the eve of a three-day War Crimes Conference and Exhibition organised by the Perdana Global Peace Organisation.

He added that the media should also play a stronger role in informing the public about the dangers of wars and their effects on social order.

Dr Mahathir said participants for the conference were from a cross-section of people comprising journalists, scientists and torture victims from Canada, the United States and Japan.

The former prime minister said the conference would also be setting up a commission and a war crimes tribunal.

War victims would be asked to provide a statutory declaration of crimes committed against them.

"It will not undermine the sta-

tus of the International Criminal Court," Dr Mahathir said adding that former judges will sit on the tribunal.

"The accused may not come, but trials in absentia have been carried out before. We think this court will make real, fair decisions," he noted.

"The Western perception is so narrow that they don't see conflicts in Iraq and Palestine as criminal compared to Darfur and Rwanda, as such the killing of Iraqi people was not perceived by the West as war crimes," said Dr Mahathir.

He added that the Prime Minister's Department had donated a considerable sum for the conference.

On reports that he had been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize by four NGOs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dr Mahathir said he had no knowledge of the matter.