

Blair and Bush liars: Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR: Not one to mince his words, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday the world should remember British Premier Tony Blair and US President George W. Bush as "the killers of children" or as "the lying prime minister or president".

"What Blair and Bush had done is worse than what Saddam (Hussein) had done," Mahathir said when opening a three-day international conference and exhibition on *Expose War Crimes; Criminalise War!*

The event, attended by about 2,500 participants, was organised by the Perdana Global Peace Organisation.

Mahathir, who is the chairman of the Perdana Leadership Foundation, proposed the setting up of an international war crimes tribunal initiated by non-governmental organisations to criminalise war and to label those found guilty as "war criminals".

"Civilisation would be more meaningful if wars,

killings and destruction are no longer accepted options in resolving disputes between nations, and until war is criminalised, we would not be truly civilised," he said.

Mahathir said a permanent tribunal should be set up and recognised by and empowered by victims of aggression and right-minded people to hear the charges levelled at the war-mongers, the leaders and the government of aggressor nation to determine their innocence or guilt and to prescribe punishment.

The tribunal should be made up of respected international jurists who would have no personal or national interest in matters referred to them, and whose judgment must be based on evidence and not sentiment.

"We should not hang Blair if the tribunal finds him guilty, but he should always carry the label 'war criminal', 'killer of children' (and) 'liar'.

And so should Bush, and the pocket Bush of the bushlands of Australia," he said, in obvious reference to Australian Prime Minister John Howard.

"The tribunal that we set up can conduct a proper trial even if the accused are not present."

"A respectable and totally impartial tribunal applying recognised laws will surely find it findings respected by the world just as the world respects the Nobel laureates, for example."

As for the punishment, he said, those found guilty should be labelled "war criminal".

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countries to enact laws to label the war criminals, but the NGOs and the sympathetic media can append the label 'war criminal' whenever their names are mentioned.

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Mahathir said all leaders, especially leaders of powerful nations, hope to be remembered, to go down in history as great men, to be identified with great deeds.

"But war criminals tried and found guilty by the tribunal should be remembered for crimes against humanity, for the people they kill, the destruction they wrought.

"They should be labelled as such and mentioned in history books as war criminals, always and forever."

He added the best jurists in the world must be assembled to draft laws making warring criminal, making sanctions criminal, the use or production of depleted uranium in weapons and other weapons of mass destruction as criminal and from time to time, to add to the list.

On nuclear powers, Mahathir said these countries claim only they can be trusted to possess nuclear weapons.

"Why? Is it because they are sensible, humane people who would not use their nuclear weapons? Can we trust them? Look at the carnage they caused with their so-called conventional weapons. They have not hesitated to kill hundreds of thousands of people with their conventional weapons," he said.



Mahathir looks at an exhibit during the anti-war crime conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He also hit out at US for adding to their nuclear arsenal more, and better, nuclear weapons as well as carrying on with nuclear tests despite the ban.

He said unless war is made illegal, the world would have to endure an endless spate of war between the powerful and the weak as there would be no security for anyone, whether involved or not.

"There would be no place in the world that would be safe, and instead of peace, there would be endless escalating wars with ways of killing and destruction we cannot always anticipate or prepare for.

"Possession of nuclear weapon will deter no one, will provide no safety and for security, nuclear weapons will be quite useless.

"The nationals of nuclear powers can be attacked and killed anywhere in the world, and issuing travel advisories simply makes prisons of their own countries."