

# War crimes panel aims to be credible

The Sun - 8/2/2007

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal pro tem committee wants to become a body with a voice that is recognised and accepted by the international community, wielding enough power to do "what the best of the world has not been able to do".

Its chairman, Datuk Abdul Kadir Sulaiman, deliberating on the scope of the tribunal, said yesterday although it did not have powers to enforce its judgments, it must churn out credible judgments with authority and ensure they are legitimate.

He said the tribunal would adopt rules and practices which would not fundamentally differ much from the best of existing international tribunals. But for that to happen, eminent jurists would have to be selected for the tribunal so that it would be well-represented globally.

"It cannot be done in a slipshod manner. The committee would make decisions without fear or favour and decisions made cannot be based on sympathy," said Abdul Kadir, a former Federal Court judge.

He said the tribunal should not be treated as "a court of last resort".

It should also be independent and impartial, giving equal opportunity for both sides to present and

argue their cases.

"We do not want to be in cohorts with the (Kuala Lumpur War Crimes) commission," he said.

Commission chairman Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad told a news conference US President George W. Bush, British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Australian Prime Minister John Howard would be charged with nine crimes, including crime against peace.

He said the committee would study the affidavits and statutory declarations of war crime victims but it would be up to the tribunal to decide whether to proceed with the charges, once it is formed.

The tribunal is still at the pro tem stage and yet to be constituted, he said.

On the commission, Mahathir said the members had yet to be decided, while experienced and impartial persons would be selected to sit on the tribunal.

Among the names mentioned for the commission are lawyer Datuk Dr Yaacob Hussain Merican, former president of the Malaysian Bar Zainur Zakaria, former magistrate and advocate and solicitor Musa Ismail, Prof Dr Mohd Akram Shair Mohamed, a law professor at International Islamic University, and Prof Gurdial Singh Nijar, a law professor at Universiti Malaya. - Bernama