

Dr M: OIC has failed to unite Muslims

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Member countries too
divisive, says Mahathir

KUALA LUMPUR: Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has lambasted the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) for failing to unite Muslims.

"It often serves to emphasise the division within the Muslim world. The disagreements between member countries are so obvious as to expose their disunity," he claimed yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, who was prime minister when Malaysia chaired the OIC in 2003, said the organisation's problem was that it comprised governments of countries, and so the countries' interests took precedence over religion.

"As an organisation of governments, the OIC is unable to consider anything purely on the basis of religious injunctions or in the interest of religion.

"Even the injunction of Islam that all Muslims are brothers cannot override certain other national priorities," he said in his keynote address at the Second International Muslim Unity Convention here.

The OIC, he added, worked on a basis of consensus, which was not conducive to organisational decision-making.

Dr Mahathir suggested the setting up a chair of Muslim non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Muslim communities and countries to restore the unity of Muslims regardless of

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MOHAMAD

sects or differences.

Such NGOs, he said, should focus on promoting Muslim brotherhood, reducing misunderstandings or suspicions, acquiring knowledge and skills and pushing for better education systems, among others.

Muslim NGOs, he added, must launch a concerted campaign to stop the revenge mentality which led to blind retaliation.

"Muslims are very angry. In anger, they lash out at everyone, including other Muslims. They blow themselves up in revenge, killing at random, not so much their enemies as their own people.

"After they have lost their lives, what have they gained?"

"Today, Muslims are deeply divided into many different sects which often are violently pitted against each other," he said.

True Muslims, Dr Mahathir added, must stop the fighting, reduce the divisions and restore the brotherhood and unity of Muslims.