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Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad says existing laws are out of date

'Amend
laws for
stiffer
penalties'

GEORGE TOWN: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on the government to consider amending the existing laws to ensure stiffer penalties against child rapists.

He said it should be done as existing laws were out of date.

He also urged the government to take steps to block access to pornographic material.

Dr Mahathir said the international community should also play its role by not uploading such materials into the Internet.

He said the current situation was different from before as "we did not hear of rape cases involving one-year-olds back then".

"Now, such cases are becoming rampant. This happens because of the availability of pornographic material, especially among the young. They tend to lose their mind and cannot differentiate between right and wrong.

"This is what causes such incidents to increase," he told a press conference here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said the government might not have legal authority over the Internet but it could find a way to block access to online pornography.

"We used to censor such materials from our newspapers and television."

He agreed to a suggestion that social problems in the country were getting more serious, attributing them to outside influence.