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Peaceful resolutions overcome conflicts, says Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad echoes Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's statement that the process of achieving peace through moderation in southern Philippines can be used as a template to end other conflicts.

Dr Mahathir said other countries should follow Malaysia's footsteps in seeking peaceful resolutions and not resort to war to overcome conflict.

He said warring nations should seek negotiations, arbitration or turn to the world court to resolve their problems.

"In Malaysia, we had territorial disputes with Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore.

"That is why we created Asean, which enabled leaders to discuss disputes and understand one another better.

"There is a Malay saying, *tak kenal maka tak cinta* (if you don't know, you don't love). As a result, we managed to solve our problems amicably."

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a lunch hosted for delegates of the 3rd Umno International Forum yesterday, in conjunction with the Umno general assembly.

The forum was titled "Conflict and conciliation in the people's politics: looking back or looking forward?"

He listed the Moro peace deal in southern Philippines as an ideal example of peace negotiations.

"Malaysia takes pride in being able to reconcile the people in southern Philippines with its central government after years of dispute.

"It is always easy to resolve conflicts through war, but we did not, not because we are cowards, but because it results in unnecessary loss and death."

He said the democratic process, especially in developing countries, must be upheld and not manipulated to suit the whims and fancies of any party.

"Democracy determines that a party with majority support will rule. Today, people are more keen on conducting street demonstrations to oppose majority rule. This negates the democratic process.

"Democracy has loopholes, but its practitioners must learn to accept the conditions.

"For instance, you must accept defeat that is handed by way of the democratic process."