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Act fast to end conflict, says Dr M

the sun - 5/3/2013

> Former PM says situation may deteriorate if standoff prolonged

KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday the government should act immediately to defeat the foreign intruders in Sabah and prosecute them for murder.

Commenting on the situation in Lahad Datu and Semporna where eight police personnel have been killed, he hoped the government will act quickly so as not to prolong the standoff, as the self-proclaimed Sulu Royal Army is unlikely to admit defeat.

"We have tried to resolve the matter without

bloodshed, but we find that these Sulu people are violent. They do not only kill soldiers but also mutilate the dead.

"They are supposed to be Muslims, but their actions are contrary to Islamic teachings," he told reporters after opening the Global Muslim Conference on Unity and Economy organised by the Malay Chamber of Commerce Malaysia here.

Mahathir, who conveyed condolences to the families of the slain

police personnel, warned the situation may deteriorate if the government fails to end it quickly. "The situation may possibly get worse because looking at

the Philippines and the people in these rebel groups, they're the type that will keep fighting even if they know they cannot win," he said.

Mahathir had been quoted on Sunday as

saying that there was no other way for the government to deal with the standoff except to launch a counter-attack.

He said the matter could no longer be settled through negotiation since the offer to the intruders to surrender was not appreciated.

"The government needs to take stern action since it has already taken a bloody turn and our people have been killed.

"I don't think there is any other way to deal with this except for the government to launch a counter-attack so we can wipe out the intruders once and for all," he said at a gathering with the people in Perak organised by Perkasa.

"Even if it means more intruders will be killed, it is unavoidable because they started the attack on Sabah first, not us," he added.

