

# Dr M: Saudi Arabia to have full OIC meeting to address issues

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia has agreed with Saudi Arabian King Salman Abdulaziz Al Saud's view to have the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) convene a full meeting to discuss pressing issues affecting the ummah.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this was the outcome of a conference call he held last night with the Saudi monarch, ahead of the Kuala Lumpur Summit (KL Summit) 2019 here.

The call was made to enable King Salman to explain the reason why he was declining an invitation to attend the summit.

Although three heads of state and governments have confirmed their attendance at the summit, invitations had been

sent out to leaders of more than 50 Muslim countries.

"His Majesty the King of Saudi Arabia (King Salman) wanted to explain why he would not attend the summit.

"He told me the reasons why he cannot attend the summit," Dr Mahathir said when asked about his call to the Saudi monarch.

The last-minute call led to organisers cancelling his dialogue, which was initially planned at the Youth Kuala Lumpur Summit yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said the KL Summit would continue with the involvement of the current list of participating nations.

"He (King Salman) holds a different opinion from us.

"His opinion is that it will be better if such matters are dis-

cussed in a full OIC meeting.

"But we are conducting this summit with (the heads of governments of) three countries only.

"So, that is his reason. He is of the opinion that such matters should not be discussed only among two or three nations. (He says) there should be an OIC meeting.

"I agreed with him," said Dr Mahathir, while reiterating his stand that the KL Summit was not meant to take over the role of the OIC.

He said Malaysia was ready to work and cooperate with other



King Salman Abdulaziz Al Saud

Muslim nations, including Saudi Arabia, when the full OIC meeting was held.

He said despite King Salman's and Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's absence from the summit, other Muslim nations had sent their representatives and delegates to attend the five-day event.

Dr Mahathir said there were pressing issues, such as the advent of Islamophobia and the unfair views of people who associ-

ated the religion with terrorism, which needed to be addressed.

"Muslims today are being tortured, imprisoned and killed.

"In India, there will be laws that will discriminate against Muslims. People can simply do all sorts of things to Muslims because we are weak and unable to defend ourselves."

When asked about Pakistani leader Imran Khan's absence, Dr Mahathir said that was the latter's prerogative.

"That's his choice, there is no compulsion. He probably could not attend because he had something else to attend to."

Dr Mahathir also lambasted a report in *Pakistan Today*, which claimed that the KL Summit aimed to take over the role of the OIC.

Earlier a statement issued by the PMO said the KL Summit would not replace the OIC.