



# 'Saddam deserves a lawful trial'

PUTRAJAYA, Fri. — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he has agreed to join a special group to help former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein obtain a fair and lawful trial.

The former Prime Minister said, "My concern is mainly to see whether what they have done is within the law, whether the trial is going to be legal or not."

"Whether or not Saddam is guilty, is not my concern," he told a Press conference today on his inclusion in the group called the Emergency Committee for Iraq, which also

consists of three other international politicians.

Dr Mahathir said he agreed to co-operate after a discussion with former US Attorney-General Ramsey Clarke whom he met in Amman, Jordan, recently.

"We had a long discussion and I maintain that our interest here is to seek a fair trial for Saddam," he said.

Dr Mahathir is also of the view that the legal fraternity in Malaysia is interested to see that the trial be conducted in a fair and equitable manner.

On the sort of actions that the Emergency Committee for

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Iraq can take to ensure a legal trial for Saddam he said, "Well, in the first place, I think people must believe that Saddam must have access to his lawyers."

"Up to this point in time, there is no evidence that he has been given access to his lawyers and yet there have been instances where Saddam has already been questioned to the benefit of a particular group. This is illegal," he said.

A foreign news report on Tuesday quoted the committee's spokeswoman as saying that it was of utmost impor-

tance to historic truth, public justice and peace, that the US respects the dignity and rights of Saddam and all officials of the former Iraqi government with absolute fidelity.

She said, "The Bush administration deliberately deprived Saddam and other officials of the right to a counsel of choice, family visits, and access to information."

Besides Dr Mahathir and Clarke, the committee also consists of former French Foreign Minister Ronald Dumas, and former Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella. — Bernama