

## **KL tribunal to try Bush, Blair for Iraq war crimes**

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### **DAY IN COURT Trial to go on despite absence of response from both leaders**

The Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal on Saturday will try former United States president George W. Bush and former British prime minister Tony Blair on a charge of committing crimes against peace during the Iraq War.

Bush and seven top US officials who served under him will also face a separate charge of crimes of torture and war crimes at the tribunal.

The three-day hearing, conducted by seven senior judges headed by retired Federal Court judge Datuk Abdul Kadir Sulaiman, will go on although the two accused leaders and other defendants have yet to respond to the tribunal's notice.

Datuk Dr Yaacob Hussain Marican, the secretary-general of the Kuala Lumpur Foundation to Criminalise War, which is holding the tribunal, said the tribunal was being convened for the third time since 2007.

Yaacob said the tribunal of conscience was modelled on the one convened by philosopher Bertrand Russell in 1966 to try the perpetrators of the Vietnam War.

Yaacob said although the tribunal lacked enforcement powers, it would publish the verdict to get the world community to treat the accused as guilty persons.

"The charges are being brought against the accused by the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Commission, which comes under our foundation, following in-depth investigations into complaints received from war victims in 2009.

"The commission acts as a peoples' initiative to provide an avenue for victims to file their complaints and let them have their day in a court of law."

Professor Gurdial S. Nijar, a law professor and author of law publications, and Professor Francis Boyle, an American professor, practitioner and advocate of international law, will head the prosecution during the trial.

The trial, to be held in an open court at the headquarters of the Al-Bukhary Foundation in Jalan Perdana here, is open to the public.

In conjunction with the tribunal, Perdana Global Peace Foundation will organise an exhibition, "War is a Crime", with a conference on Friday.

Its chairman, Tan Sri Norian Mai, said the conference's theme, "The Arab Uprising", to be opened by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, would see speakers such as

former US presidential candidate and congresswoman Cynthia McKinney and former United Nations assistant secretary-general Denis Halliday.

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