

**Dr Mahathir confirms he was in the country during the Memali incident**  
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Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today confirmed that he was in the country on the day of the Memali incident in which 14 civilians and two policemen were killed when security forces laid siege on the remote village in Kedah almost 30 years ago.

However, Dr Mahathir, who was then the prime minister, denied in a blog posting today, that his former deputy Tun Musa Hitam had asked him to postpone his visit to China which was to begin a day after the incident on November 19, 1985.

In his chedet blog posting today, Dr Mahathir said on November 20, 1985, he led a massive private sector delegation to China because he believed there were abundant trade opportunities with that country which had only then opened up to external trade participation.

"I cannot recall Tun Musa (Hitam) coming up to me to ask me not to go to Beijing, but he was with many others, at the airport, to wish me well on my trip to China. Even at that time I cannot recall if he (Musa) had advised me against going abroad," he said .

Dr Mahathir said he was confident in Musa's ability to handle the situation, "that I appointed him as acting prime minister". Musa was the Home Minister at the time of the incident.

Musa said he had told Dr Mahathir during the briefing that the incident was in Kedah, which is his home state; that it involved Muslims; and that by postponing his China trip, it showed Dr Mahathir prioritised and cared about an incident taking place in the country.

However, Musa said the former prime minister ignored his advice.

Dr Mahathir said he believed Musa did not foresee the loss of lives resulting from his decision.

"The issue with regards to me not being in Malaysia when the incident occurred was not spread by me. I did not mention this at all in my book. What is publicly known is that Datuk Musa Hitam was the Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister at that time.

"The Inspector General of Police discussed and reported to him as the Home Minister. The Home Minister is also involved in making the decision on actions that needed to be taken. It is surely unbecoming if when things were going well, only then one admits to the responsibility," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the policemen were killed before they returned fire.

"It is very unfortunate that while the deaths of Ibrahim and his followers are remembered and they were even declared as martyrs, the deaths of the members of the security forces are forgotten," he said.

In a forum in Kota Baru recently, Musa had said Dr Mahathir was in Kuala Lumpur during the Memali incident and later said he had asked Dr Mahathir to put off his China trip and had briefed him on the Memali operation. – April 10, 2014.

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