

Memali? I can't remember, says Mahathir
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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he cannot remember if he was in the country during the Memali incident where 18 people were killed 29 years ago.

"I can't remember..." he told journalists in Kuala Lumpur when quizzed if he was in the country during the bloody event.

Mahathir was responding to his then deputy prime minister Musa Hitam who claimed on Thursday that his former boss was in Kuala Lumpur when the incident happened.

Mahathir said he needed to look into his records and check if Musa's claim was true.

"I am studying the truth of what he (Musa) said," added Mahathir.

"Since this happened a long time ago, I need to check back to see what he said is true."

Largely absolved

Musa told a forum in Kota Bharu two days ago: "Dr Mahathir was in Kuala Lumpur, even on the second, third and fourth day after that, he was still in Kuala Lumpur."

Mahathir was largely absolved over the deaths of 18 people in a deadly police assault on Memali in 1985 as he was claimed to be on an official visit to China.

Armoured vehicles rolled into the remote village in Baling, Kedah to crack down on a religious sect led by Ibrahim Mahmud, better known as Ibrahim Libya.

Some 400 police officers stormed the village on Nov 19 that year after a stand-off where villagers refused to surrender Ibrahim to the authorities, who accused him of being a deviant, and they fought back.

The siege resulted in the deaths of 14 villagers and four police officers - considered one of the bloodiest episodes in recent history.