

## **Mahathir: Saudis not suitable partner to fight terrorism**

**Free Malaysia Today**

**July 16, 2017**

**By Adam Abu Bakar**

**The former prime minister says anti-terror alliance must be with countries that are not involved in any war.**

KUALA LUMPUR: Saudi Arabia is not a suitable partner for Malaysia in promoting moderation in the Muslim world or in countering terrorism, says Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The former prime minister said any such cooperation can only be with a country that is not involved in a war, a condition he said Riyadh had failed to fulfill.

“Any cooperation (to fight terror) must be with countries that are not involved in war, but we are now working with a country that is clearly taking part in a war.

“That is not proper,” the Pakatan Harapan chairman said.

Saudi Arabia is currently engaged in a military operation in Yemen, backing its government’s fight against the Houthi rebels.

Rights groups have condemned the Saudi-led bombardments of Yemen, which they said have killed tens of thousands of civilians. More than three million people have been displaced by the conflict.

Mahathir, who not long ago organised a global campaign to outlaw war under his Perdana Global Peace Foundation, was asked to comment on the government’s decision to approve a 16ha piece of land in Putrajaya for a new “centre for peace” named after present Saudi ruler, Salman Abdulaziz.

It has recently emerged that the Muslim World League (MWL), an organisation heavily funded by the Saudi government to prop up the kingdom’s Islamic image worldwide, is also involved in the new centre.

The group has for decades acted as Riyadh’s chief mouthpiece through the publication of Islamic materials and the financing of mosques and Islamic centres from Asia to Europe.

But a recent report by a British think-tank linked MWL to extremist ideologies behind militant groups such as Al-Qaeda, Taliban and Islamic State (IS).

The plan for the centre also baffled Washington-based terrorism expert, Zachary Abuza, who said Saudi Arabia could not become a representative of moderate Islam.

“Saudis have been spreading Wahhabism throughout the world, especially Southeast Asia, from a more tolerant brand of Shafiite Islam to a more austere version,” the professor from the National War College told FMT.

**Copyright (C) 2009-2016 MToday News Sdn. Bhd. All Rights Reserved.**

Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/07/16/mahathir-saudi-arabia-not-appropriate-partner-to-counter-terrorism/>