

Mahathir wins Libyan human rights award

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30 Nov - Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad awarded the **Gaddafi International Prize for Human Rights** this evening in Libya.

According to *Bernama*, Mahathir is to be presented the award in appreciation for 'his deeds and contributions to the Islamic world'. The award is also in conjunction with the Fourth International Conference on Popular Islamic Leadership in Tripoli.

The Gaddafi International Prize for Human Rights is given out by a Libyan non-governmental organisation established in 1988 which bears the same name.



Its objectives, among others, is to 'raise collective and individual awareness on the importance of human rights and to support the peaceful struggle towards realising the freedom of human beings'.

Former recipients of the prize include Nelson Mandela, former South African president and anti-apartheid advocate in 1989, American black leader Louise Farakan (1996) and Cuban President Fidel Castro (1998). Others include the Palestine Children's Intifada in 1990 and the children killed in the Bosnian conflict (1993).

Inappropriate choice *Bernama* quoted Mahathir as saying said the award was 'unexpected', and that it was 'an honour'. Earlier this year, Mahathir sparked boycotts by 30 local NGO groups when he spoke at the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia's (Suhakam) annual conference. His stinging speech on the American invasion of Iraq resulted in certain foreign diplomats walking out.

The NGOs said Mahathir was an inappropriate choice to be invited to the conference considering his directive to launch 1987's Operasi Lalang which saw scores of political dissidents arrested without trial, the displacement of 10,000 Orang Asli due to the Bakun Dam construction and the sacking and jailing for former deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim.

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