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MALAYSIA REGRETS US HARSH ACTION ON ITS CITIZEN

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KOTA BAHARU, March 19 (Bernama) -- Malaysia regrets that one of its citizens was recently subjected to harsh treatment by the United States authorities, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Commenting on the complaints by Malaysian industrialist Tan Sri Eric Chia that he was ill-treated by United States authorities, the Prime Minister said he very much regretted what happened to Chia.

Dr Mahathir said he could not visualise how a 60-year-old man could have harassed someone who was younger to the extent of the police being summoned.

"Even if he had done so, is the move to handcuff him, strip him and chain him fair, the Prime Minister asked.

In Malaysia the government did not do such things "for if we do such things we'll be branded as barbarians and what are we to say to people who commit such things," he said. -- more

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Malaysia - citizen 2 (last) Kota Baharu

The Prime Minister said he was saddened that this was the second such incident to befall Malaysian citizens.

Not long before a group of Malaysians was also subjected to the same treatment by the United States authorities, he said.

On the incident involving 16-year-old stowaway Shamsul Ramli, 16, Dr Mahathir said the government was waiting for a report on this from the Malaysia Airlines.

It could be possible that Shamsul was an airport worker and could have slipped into the wheel bay of the aircraft.

No time limit had been set but the government wanted a speedy report, he said.

The boy's body was recovered from the wheel bay of the Boeing 747 aircraft when it landed in Johannesburg after a direct flight from Kuala Lumpur early this week. -- Bernama

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