

# PM: Be more sensitive when carrying out raids

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Cabinet has ordered the enforcement authorities to be more sensitive when carrying out raids against illegal immigrants.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said last night that the authorities must be careful when carrying out such operations to avoid allegations.

However, the Prime Minister stressed that there was no need for Malaysia to apologise to the Philippine Government over the rounding up of 1,200 Filipinas outside a church here last month.

Describing the raid as part of the efforts to weed out illegal immigrants, Dr Mahathir said it was "un-

fortunate when people are arrested near the church."

He added that even Muslim illegal immigrants had been arrested in mosques and no one had protested against such moves.

"But people are quick to point out and complain (when raids are carried out near churches) because there is a perception that the Government, made up of mostly Muslims, is inconsiderate to other religions," he said after attending a Hari Raya gathering for reporters organised by the Information Ministry.

Earlier, AFP reported from Manila that the Philippine Foreign Affairs Department was looking into the expulsion of a Fil-

ipino journalist from Malaysia earlier this week.

President Fidel Ramos also said yesterday a joint commission between the Philippines and Malaysia was continuing to look into the detention of the Filipinas near the church.

Asked on the case of Leah Makabenta, an editor of the Interpress Service who was expelled by Kuala Lumpur on Sunday for allegedly writing an unfavourable article, Ramos said:

"That is being handled by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

"They did it automatically without my having to give them specific instructions but I am awaiting a report from (Foreign Secretary Roberto) Romulo."