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# Police have to maintain law and order, says Mahathir

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**KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs:** Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today defended police action against illegal demonstrators in Jalan Kebun, stressing that they have not exceeded their mandate to keep law and order.

"It is not as if they suddenly go into somebody's house ... drag him out and beat him up. That is police brutality and this happens in many developed countries," the prime minister said.

In the case of the Jalan Kebun illegal demonstration last year, Mahathir said the police were enforcing the law when someone broke it.

"If the police say 'please dis-

perse' you disperse there is no problem. When the police say 'you disperse' ... they (demonstrators) say 'come and stop me', the police will have to use force," he said after launching the Cheras Education Foundation.

Mahathir made the remarks when asked about the response from a member of the Malaysian Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) to his

statement yesterday that Suhakam was influenced by western values when it accused police of acting excessively during the Jalan Kebun protest.

He said the duty of the police is to keep life going, but the demonstrators were creating problems for the people and the police had to put an end to it.

"In western countries, the rights of the people are not important, but the right of indi-

viduals to demonstrate is.

"When they find themselves with a demonstration, they (will) change their mind and beat up and even shoot people," he said.

Mahathir said he noticed that no one reported what he said yesterday, that in the west they not only they shot a man but also drove twice over his body

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with a car. This is police brutality.

He said with the report, police will now have to always worry about what Suhakam will report on them. Not only that, police may have to face western media like CNN which will follow the police everywhere to take pictures of police brutality.

"This hampers the ability to enforce the law and if we don't enforce the law in this country or in any country for the matter, the citizens will not be protected," he said.

"Supposing the police feel they should not do anything ... let them do what they like ... what will our lives be like?"

On Suhakam commissioner Tan Sri Anuar Zainal Abidin's statement that the panel based its findings on facts and was not

influenced by others, Mahathir reiterated that Suhakam was influenced by western thinking.

Told that Anuar had said the report was not to condemn or criticise the government but to improve things, he said if that was the case and the report was for the government, it should have been sent to the government.

"Do you have to publicise it as if to criticise the government ... you don't tell the government, we are very open and liberal."

On Umno supreme council member Datuk Shahrir Samad's statement that if the government was not happy with Suhakam's report, it should disband the commission, Mahathir said: "Shahrir can say what he likes, his opinion is of no concern to me ... it is something that I throw into my wastepaper basket."