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# Indon maids also as a last resort, says PM

**KUALA LUMPUR,** Thurs: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad clarified today that the government's decision to make Indonesian workers the last choice of foreign labour also extends to domestic maids.

This decision comes after two incidents of rioting by Indonesian workers earlier this week.

Mahathir said while Indonesian workers might be considered in the future, the government will give priority to workers from other countries.

However, he said this decision will not jeopardise bilateral ties with Indonesia, adding that although certain quarters are already painting a bad picture of Malaysia over

this issue, he is confident that Malaysia's relations with its neighbour will remain good.

Mahathir also dismissed allegations by Indonesian lobby group, Consortium for the Defence of Indonesian Migrant Workers (Kopbumi), that the rampage was ignited by the mistreatment and brutality of the Malaysian police.

"Please prove their claims. If we compare our so-called police brutality and theirs, I think theirs fare much worse," he said after chairing a two-and-a-half-hour Umno Supreme Council meeting at the party headquarters here today.

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# A lot of cases involving Indons not publicised, says Mahathir

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He said there are certain quarters in Indonesia that are not happy with the strong bilateral relations enjoyed by both countries.

If action is not taken, it is the workers' act of rioting and rampaging that will jeopardise relations.

However, he said he has no plans to meet Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri over the issue.

On claims by an Indonesian government official that

the riots were isolated crimes involving their citizens, Mahathir said: "There are many cases involving them which we don't publicise."

"Actually, there are a lot of crimes involving Indonesians, and most of the crimes committed are quite serious, such as armed robbery."

He said the influx of foreign workers was because of the low wages they command and the fact that locals are not attracted to low-paying jobs.