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Government to take rational approach to anti-Malaysia sentiments

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Kuala Lumpur would resolve rationally the anti-Malaysia sentiments in Indonesia and the Philippines.

"I'm trying to resolve this issue in a rational way, so if they say that we are ill-treating ...let them come and see for themselves," he said after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting at Menara Dato' Onn today.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the spate of demonstrations in Jakarta and Manila in protest against the alleged ill-treatment of illegal immigrants.

Asked if Indonesia and the Philippines should do more to prevent "provocative" demonstrations like the burning of the Jalur Gemilang, Dr Mahathir said such actions were not the doing of either Government.

"It is not the Government's action.

If either Government starts burning our flag then we might have to break off relations, but this is (the work of) some 'half-past-six' demonstrators.

"We have had similar demonstrators here. It does not effect the Government ...we have not been affected at all by these protests."

On reports accusing Malaysia of being brutal with the illegal immigrants, Dr Mahathir said such "brutality" was never highlighted when the illegal immigrants made Malaysia their home for decades.

"They stayed here for so many years, their children went to our schools, they obtained treatment from our hospitals and during that period they did not say anything about us being brutal."