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Indon-Apology

JAKARTA APOLOGISES TO M'SIA FOR RAMPAGE BY INDON WORKERS

By: Openg Onn

JAKARTA, Jan 22 (Bernama) -- Indonesia has apologised to Malaysia for last week's violent riot by 500 Indonesian workers at a textile factory in Negeri Sembilan, a newspaper report said.

Manpower and Transmigration Minister Jacob Nuwa Wea, who extended the apology, said the Indonesian government regretted the incident.

There was no confirmation whether an official apology had been sent to Malaysia but Jacob's statement on the matter was carried by the English-language daily "The Jakarta Post."

In the incident in Nilai, rampaging Indonesian workers overturned police vehicles, ransacked facilities at their hostel and jeered at security personnel in protest over the arrest of 16 of their colleagues for alleged drug abuse.

The Malaysian police had since arrested 30 workers involved in the incident for investigation.

The newspaper quoted Jacob as saying that the Indonesian government would not protect the workers by interfering in the investigation.

"Malaysia has its own laws, our government cannot interfere with the Malaysian authorities investigating into all aspect of the incident," he said.

However, he hoped the incident would not create a negative impact on other Indonesian workers in Malaysia or affect good relations between the two neighbouring countries.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir had said that following the incident, Malaysia would put Indonesia last on the list when recruiting foreign workers.

Yesterday, the Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda appealed to Malaysia not to make judgment on Indonesian workers based on the incident.

Malaysia is already hosting 700,000 Indonesian workers who could not seek employment at home besides several thousands more who had entered the country illegally.

-- BERNAMA

OPP RYN