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Mahathir-Flag

M'SIA WILL NOT PROTEST OVER FLAG-BURNING INCIDENT, SAYS DR M

PENANG, Aug 27 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will not lodge any protest with the Indonesian Government over the action by a small group of Indonesians who burnt a Malaysian flag outside the Malaysian Embassy in Jakarta yesterday, Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said today.

He said Malaysia would not retaliate to the incident because it was not the action of the Indonesian Government.

He said the incident did not reflect the Indonesian Government's stand but instead it was done by a group of Indonesians who were "extreme."

"Indonesia has a population of 220 million and out of that, surely there will be a small group of people who are irresponsible and we cannot respond to them.

"This is not the action of the Indonesian Government," he told a media conference after delivering a keynote address in conjunction with the 30th anniversary celebrations of the electronics industry in Penang.

He was asked to comment on the action by 50 demonstrators who set a Jalur Gemilang ablaze in protest over Malaysia's new immigration laws that provide for jail and whipping for illegal immigrants

According to press reports today, about 50 demonstrators chanted slogans "Topple The Malaysian Government" while a small group set fire to a Malaysian flag.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was not the only country with tough laws as other countries also had similar laws.

"They (Indonesians) cannot use this as an excuse to do that (demonstrate)," he said.

He reiterated the call by Foreign Minister, Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, that Malaysians should refrain from visiting Indonesia temporarily to ensure their safety.

"The Foreign Minister has advised Malaysians not to go to Indonesia now," he said.

On permanent resident (PR) status given to foreigners living in Malaysia, Dr Mahathir said the status could be revoked anytime if they were involved in serious crimes.

The status was not something permanent and could be withdrawn if they were found to be involved in serious crimes in this country, he added.

-- BERNAMA

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