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Abdullah-Somalia

GOVT TO DETERMINE IF M'SIANS INVOLVED IN SOMALI PROJECTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 9 (Bernama) -- The government will determine the extent of the involvement, if any, of Malaysians in "sinister projects" in Somalia before taking any action, Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

"I wish to be sure first of the extent of our involvement in such projects and the views of those already involved, and will then make a decision," he said.

Abdullah told reporters this after briefing them on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed's meeting with his Czech counterpart Vaclav Klaus here.

He was asked to comment on a foreign agency report that said a Somlali faction had warned Malaysians in south Mogadishu that it would not guarantee their security in that part of the divided city.

Abdi Hassan Awale Qyebdid, the interior secretary of the United Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance faction, was quoted as saying that Kol Lim Tow, a Malaysian commander who had served in the failed UN operation in Somalia, was involved in "sinister projects" being carried out in Somalia by the Malaysian government.

Abdullah said he was not aware of Lim's involvement in such projects, and that any Malaysian project in Somalia must be a private sector undertaking as the government was not involved in any project there.

He said the government had once been interested in taking part in a port repair project in Mogadishu but decided to stay out due to the factional fighting in the African nation.

On Malaysian investors in Somalia, Abdullah said it was up to them to decide if it was safe to invest in that country.

"Opportunities for us to invest in other countries are wide and if it's no longer safe there it's perhaps better to move to other places, but probably they (the investors) have invested a lot of money and this is preventing them from doing so," he added.

Meanwhile, the Defence Ministry today said there were no Malaysian troops on duty in Somalia at present.

The ministry's most recent involvement in Somalia was in February 1995, it said in a statement. -- BERNAMA

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