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Abdullah-Ligitan

BRINGING CLAIM ISSUE TO INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE

KOTA KINABALU, Jan 16 (Bernama) -- Senior officials from Malaysia and Indonesia have started a series of discussions on how the two countries could jointly bring their overlapping claims on Sipadan and Ligitan islands to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague, Holland.

Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the first round of discussions was held in Kuala Lumpur last week and later to be followed by another meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia.

"The discussion among others centred on the preparations made by both countries to jointly bring the claim to ICJ," he told reporters after calling on Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Ghapur Salleh, here today.

The Kuala Lumpur meeting was the first between senior officials of both countries on the 27-year-old issue since Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta agreed in October last year to refer the overlapping claims to the ICJ.

Abdullah hoped that both parties could come to an agreement on ways of bringing the case to ICJ after the Jakarta meeting.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had in October last year described the issue on the overlapping claims of the islands as over after the two countries agreed to bring the matter to the ICJ.

He also said that Malaysia would abide with the decision of the ICJ, even if it was in favour of Indonesia.

On the establishment of a Philippine consulate in Sabah, Abdullah said the Philippines had not decided where to locate it.

"We don't want to pressure them on the matter. Let them decide and inform us," he said.

On his meeting with Ghapur, Abdullah said they discussed various matters including Wisma Putra's willingness to provide assistance to Sabah if it decided to send trade mission overseas. -- BERNAMA

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