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Observer-Safe

LT KOMANDER AMINUDDIN SAFE IN FREETOWN

PEKAN, July 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysian naval officer Lt Komander Aminuddin Abdul Rashid who was released yesterday after being held captive by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) militia since May is now safe and sound in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today Aminuddin was rescued by United Nations special forces at 5am Sierra Leone time.

"He is safe, free of any injuries and is now in Freetown (Sierra Leone)," he said after opening the function to debate Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's speech when opening and closing the last Umno general assembly.

This latest development means that all three Malaysian observers taken hostage by the RUF have been freed. The two others are Lt Kol Hamzah Bachik and Mejar Ganesh a/l Jaganathan.

Aminuddin is among 222 Unamsil men and 11 observers from Britain, Indonesia, India, Pakistan and Russia freed by the rescue mission.

On allegations that the recent incident in Sauk, Perak was a drama staged by Umno, Najib said they were preposterous.

"This is a false allegation, a very big lie and something absurd," he said.

Asked to comment on the call by the Malaysian senators club secretary Rosli Mat Hassan for the ban on sale of military fatigues to the public, Najib said such move would not be effective.

"If they want to impersonate (as military personnel), they can still buy (uniforms) at the border or elsewhere. The issue is that we must tighten security and remind security forces that the unthinkable can always happen," he said.

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