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PARLIAMENT: NO NEED FOR DR MAHATHIR TO FLY TO PHILIPPINES ON JOLO ISSUE

KUALA LUMPUR, July 10 (Bernama) -- The visits by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Pandikar Amin Mulia to the Philippines recently were sufficient to state the government's stand that the case on the detention of hostages in Jolo should be resolved immediately.

Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Leo Michael Toyad said that during the meetings with the two ministers, the Philippine government had promised and given its assurance that the problem would be resolved as soon as possible.

"The ministry feels that the stand conveyed by the two ministers is sufficient and it is not necessary for the Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) to go to the Philippines to discuss the matter," he said when replying to the supplementary question by Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong) at the Dewan Rakyat today.

Tan had earlier suggested that Dr Mahathir holds a meeting with Philippine President Joseph Estrada to express Malaysia's disappointment over the handling of the hostage issue in Jolo which had yet to be resolved after almost three months.

According to Toyad, although Malaysia was disappointed because the negotiations were going too slowly without much progress, it had to respect the principles and formalities in bilateral relations between the two countries.

--BERNAMA
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