

# KL ready to deport Misuari

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## We are looking at latest developments that may influence move, says Mahathir

**KUALA LUMPUR, Fri:** Malaysia is ready to send rebel leader Nur Misuari back to the Philippines and is looking into latest developments which may influence the deportation.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre here today.

He said both he and

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had briefed the supreme council members on the issue.

Misuari, the former governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, faces rebellion and sedition charges in connection with a bloody armed revolt by his followers in the southern Philippines last month.

He was arrested with six

followers for illegal entry in a pre-dawn raid on Pulau Jampiras, off Sabah, on Nov 24.

Mahathir was reported yesterday as saying the Nur Misuari issue is a sensitive matter that has put Malaysia in a spot.

In addition to jeopardising ties with the Philippines, the prime minister said there is a danger that Malaysia "may be accused of collaborating

with terrorists.

Philippine President Gloria Arroyo said today Misuari will be deported soon under a schedule agreed upon by Kuala Lumpur and Manila.

According to AFP, she told a news conference in Manila: "We're already preparing in the Philippines where to put him, how to arrest him, what charges to file.

"So we will be ready for

Misuari at a mutually-agreed upon period, which will not be long from now."

She did not give a definite timetable.

Arroyo praised the Malaysian government for detaining Misuari, who had fled to Sabah last month after allegedly leading the armed revolt that left more than 100 people dead.

She said if Misuari's continued stay in Malaysia had become a burden to Kuala Lumpur, "we are already preparing to receive him and to put him in jail somewhere here in the Philippines".

Manila had earlier appealed to Kuala Lumpur to detain Misuari for the time being, until the situation in the southern Philippines stabilised.

It suggested that Malaysian police investigate the 60-year-old Misuari's alleged involvement in a series of kid-

nappings in resorts off Sabah last year.

But Malaysia fears Misuari's prolonged detention here could sour relations with the Philippines.

On this, Arroyo said: "I wouldn't want to impose on the very good cooperation that Prime Minister Mahathir has been showing to our country if it is going to be a burden on their government."

Filipino ambassador to Kuala Lumpur Jose Brillantes "has a standing request" to visit Misuari, foreign department spokesman Victoriano Lecaros said on government television in Manila.

The request "will be considered by the Malaysian authorities, and normally we do grant visits by the embassy representatives," Malaysia's ambassador-designate to Manila Mohamad Taufik told reporters.