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Misuari-OIC

BRING MISUARI BEFORE THE OIC, SAYS SULTAN

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 24 (Bernama) -- Former governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao Nur Misuari should be allowed to present his side of the story before the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), said Sultan Elly Velez Lao Pamatong, who claims to be Misuari's legal counsel.

He said that since Misuari is a permanent observer of the OIC, he should be allowed to present his case to the 57-member OIC and also its eight-member committee dealing with the Philippines.

"We requested for the meeting because we believe that Misuari's fate should not be decided only by Malaysia and Indonesia but also by other members of the OIC," he said at a news conference here, minus US-based Nation of Islam International's spokesman A. Akbar Muhammad.

Akbar had to return to the US to brief the founder of the biggest Islamic organisation in the US, Louise Farrakan on the current situation concerning Misuari.

He was sent to Malaysia to see Misuari and invite him to the US.

Pamatong said the OIC members should be allowed to hear what Misuari had to say due to his position as a good standing and a permanent member of the OIC for three decades.

He said both of them had made the request to the OIC headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Malaysia and Indonesia have helped to mediate a peace deal between the Philippines and Misuari's Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in 1996.

On another matter, Pamatong said he should also be allowed to see Misuari because he had the right to counsel since Malaysia was holding the latter in custody for the Philippine government.

"Unfortunately even the Philippine government, through Ambassador Jose Brillantes has a pending application to see him and has not been acted upon. The United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees here (Kuala Lumpur) has also not been allowed to see him," he said.

Pamatong said he had written seven times to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to see Misuari but perhaps he was declined a visit for reasons of internal security.

He said he would not dispute the manner in which Malaysia had acted against Misuari in holding him custody because Malaysia is a sovereign country.

However, he hoped that Malaysia would follow the 1951 United Nations (UN) convention on refugees, giving Misuari the right to pass through a country and in fact, the host country was supposed to provide travel documents.

"But again, whether or not Malaysia follows the international convention is the prerogative of Malaysia and there is not much you can do if they did not follow.

"Hopefully it will be followed because if not, it will weaken the world community and weaken the stability of UN," Pamatong said.

-- BERNAMA

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