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DPM: Misuari to be deported soon

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Renegade Moro National Liberation Front leader Nur Misuari, 61, will be deported as soon as the Philippine Government has ironed out all relevant procedures pertaining to his deportation.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Malaysia had no problems in deporting Misuari to the Philippines.

Asked whether Misuari would be deported before the end of this month, Abdullah said they were awaiting for the response from the Philippines. He was speaking to reporters at his Hari Raya open house at the Putra World Trade Centre.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he had yet to meet with any representatives from the Philippines on the deportation of Misuari.

"At this juncture, we want to meet with their representative first. I do not know what they have to say. I have not met them yet, so I cannot say anything," he told reporters at his open house in Seri Perdana.

Dr Mahathir also reiterated that Misuari would be sent to a third country if Manila was reluctant to have him back.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, when met at Abdullah's open house, said the Government was trying to deport Misuari "the soonest as possible" to the Philippines.

"Both parties have agreed. Manila wants Misuari and Malaysia is willing to release him," he said.

He said Malaysia could detain Misuari for 30 days under the Immigration Act and all measures were being taken to deport him within the period.

Home Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Aseh Che Mat, at the same open house, said they were working very hard to deport Misuari as soon as possible.

Malaysia detained Misuari for entering the country without official documents under the Immigration laws.

He was arrested together with six MNLF followers on Jampiras Island, Sandakan, on Nov 24.

Manila filed charges of rebellion against Misuari last month after hundreds of his followers attacked military posts on the southern Jolo Island in a failed uprising.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo said recently that Manila was ready to take back Misuari.

She said she did not want Misuari to be a burden to Malaysia and in fact plans had been made to bring him back and he would be placed in confinement and charged.

"I would rather get him back to the Philippines after Malaysia has finished interrogating him," she told TV3's In Conversation programme.