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Wife, children and lawyer visit Nur Misuari for two hours

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Tarhata Ibrahim Misuari, 27, wife of deposed leader Nur Misuari today expressed her gratitude to the Malaysian Government for being allowed to see her husband.

"We're very happy to be able to see him (Misuari) today ... to be assured that he is in good health. We're thankful to be given the opportunity to be reunited with him," she said at her hotel here.

Present during the interview was their lawyer, Elly V.L. Pamatong.

She said her children Nur Redha, 7, Khalid, 4, and nine-month-old Nurhata were very excited to see their father during the two-hour reunion at the Federal police headquarters in Bukit Aman this evening.

Tarhata said Misuari, the Moro National Liberation Front chairman and former Governor of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao, is hoping that he would not be deported to the Philippines.

She said they were grateful to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the reunion.

"He (Misuari) looked like he has lost a little weight, but he is in good health. We hope we will be given the opportunity to visit him again," said Tarhata, who last saw her husband on Nov 16 in Silangkan, Sulu.

Misuari and six followers were arrested in Pulau Jampiras, off Sabah, on Nov 24 for entering Malaysia illegally.

Meanwhile, Pamatong said there were no arrangements for the family to visit Misuari again, but they will remain here for any new developments.

"The family will be here for as long as they're allowed to. But if she has to leave, I will arrange for them to go to the United States," he said.

He added that the family would, however, follow Misuari to any country he was sent, to including the Philippines.

Earlier in the day, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar gave the assurance that Misuari was being well taken care of and was in good health.

He was asked about reports where Tarhata raised concerns that her husband might have died while under detention in Malaysia.

"We assure that Misuari is not maltreated or in a situation that places him in any danger," Syed Hamid said at a Press conference at his office here.

"He is being well taken care of and is in good health."

Syed Hamid said that Misuari was not a criminal but someone who had fled here due to the political situation in the Philippines.

Misuari and six followers were arrested in Pulau Jampiras off Sabah on Nov 24 for entering Malaysia illegally. He fled southern Philippines after declaring war against Manila.

Asked if there was any change in Malaysia's stand to deport Misuari to the Philippines, Syed Hamid said:

"There is no change in our stand as of now."

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