

# Arroyo phones Dr M to express concern

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**MANILA, Fri.** — Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo called Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad late today to say she was worried about reports that Filipinos had been mistreated in Malaysia's crackdown on illegal migrant workers, her spokesman said.

Public furor has risen steadily in the Philippines since the Government said earlier this week that three children had died while being deported.

"She called, she raised her concerns about the plight of the deportees, and they had substantial

agreement on what needs to be done," Arroyo spokesman Ignacio Bunye Bunye said.

The president will make an official statement on radio and television tomorrow, he added.

Another official said Arroyo was smiling as she talked to Dr Mahathir but was unsure how long the phone call that started at 5.15pm lasted.

The call came shortly after former president Fidel Ramos rebuffed Arroyo's plan to send him as a personal emissary to Malaysia to discuss better treatment of Filipinos facing deportation.