

# Probe into allegations that Filipina raped at centre

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CYBERJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has ordered a probe into allegations of sexual molestation made by a 13-year-old Filipina detainee being held at a temporary detention centre in Kota Kinabalu.

"The Malaysian Government and I personally view the allegation with serious concern," he said, adding that he had ordered "a swift and thorough investigation to verify the allegation."

"I am annoyed at this thing,

that there are these allegations. But if it is true, then it is our duty to take action against the people involved," he told reporters after wrapping up discussions at the sixth annual meeting of the Multimedia Super Corridor's International Advisory Panel here yesterday.

Philippines President Gloria Arroyo-Macapagal had reportedly expressed her outrage over the allegation in a letter to Dr Mahathir, which news reports said, was handed over to the Malaysian Embassy in Manila two days ago.

On the reportedly harsh

tone of the letter, he said it was perhaps strongly worded because "they feel very angry about it."

He said that Malaysians should be aware that they could not hide from the law if they had committed any crime.

Dr Mahathir gave his assurance to "the Government and the people of the Philippines that appropriate action will be taken against those responsible in accordance with Malaysian laws."

The Philippines had on

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# Special police team set up to probe claim

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Monday sent a team to Sabah to investigate conditions at the temporary detention centres following reports that Filipino deportees were allegedly ill-treated by Malaysian authorities.

Philippines presidential adviser Nur Jaafar, who led the team, said he was "quite satisfied" with the conditions at the centres.

Nur, who visited the Tawau Immigration detention camp where 60 of the 200 inmates were Filipinos, said he had also received many complaints there.

However, he said the complaints had to be verified by the team and declined to give any specific complaint raised.

In Kota Kinabalu, Sabah Police Commissioner Datuk Ramli Yusuff said a special team had been

set up to probe the claim.

He said the team, headed by state police serious crimes unit chief Deputy Supt Hazani Ghazali, was trying to make arrangements for the girl, who was now in the southern Philippine island of Bongao, to be brought here.

In another development, Special Task Force for Illegal Immigrant Affairs assistant director Asst Comm Sidin Karim said the basic amenities of shelter, food and medical care were provided in the three depots in Sabah, in accordance with international standards and Malaysian laws.

"We are providing three meals a day, shelter and medicine that are basic needs of a human being kept under detention," he said yesterday.

The depots are in Menggatal

near the city capital and at Sandakan and Tawau in the east coast of Sabah.

Sidin said that there had been no riots or any problems between detainees and the personnel at the centres, from where some 215,000 nationals from various countries had been deported since 1990.

"It costs the Government RM3.90 for three meals a day for each detainee," he said, adding that the fare for air-conditioned bus to transport Filipino migrants from Kota Kinabalu to Sandakan was RM25 each.

The Government also pays RM73.50 for their ferry trip from Sandakan to Zamboanga City, he said, adding that it cost Malaysia some RM4.13mil in the first eight months of this year to send back some 27,000 illegal immigrants.

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