

01 SEP 2002

Philippines-Mission

PHILIPPINE PRESIDENTIAL ADVISOR NUR JAAFAR WILL HEAD MISSION TO KL

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 1 (Bernama) -- Philippine presidential advisor Nur Jaafar will head a mission to Kuala Lumpur tomorrow to discuss the issue of deportation of Filipino illegal immigrants.

Philippine ambassador to Malaysia Jose Brillantes confirmed today that Nur, a former congressman, would lead the delegation which would include several government officials.

"Besides going to Kuala Lumpur, the mission will also go to Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan," he told Bernama when contacted, here.

Most of the Filipino illegal immigrants are being held at detention centres in Menggatal, Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan.

Asked whether the delegation would meet Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad or his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who is also the Home Minister, Brillantes said the mission's itinerary had not been finalised yet.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir said the government had decided to temporarily halt the deportation of Filipino illegal immigrants following a request from Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

The Philippines' request for a postponement of the deportation followed a public outcry in the country over alleged mistreatment of Filipino illegal immigrants in detention centres in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said the reports of mistreatment were untrue and officials from the republic could come and investigate.

-- BERNAMA

MHI AZZ JK