

03 SEPT 2002

Mahathir-Gonzales

ARROYO'S SPECIAL ENVOY MEETS DR M

PUTRAJAYA, Sept 3 (Bernama) -- Philippine President's Special Envoy, Norberto Gonzales, today met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at his office here.

An aide of the prime minister confirmed that the 30-minute meeting took place in the afternoon.

The meeting, among others, discussed media reports in the Philippines that Filipino illegal immigrants detained at holding centres in Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan and Tawau were treated inhumanely by the Malaysian police.

Gonzales is the Presidential Adviser for Special Concerns.

It was reported earlier that President Gloria Arroyo would send former Philippine president Fidel Ramos to meet Dr Mahathir to discuss the matter.

Yesterday, Arroyo's Adviser for Muslim Affairs, Nur Jaafar, and a nine-member delegation arrived in Kota Kinabalu.

He told reporters in Kota Kinabalu today the delegation was sent to "see with our own eyes the conditions of our illegal countrymen here but not to investigate and not to point fingers at anyone."

The Malaysian authorities have temporarily stopped deporting illegal Filipinos pending inspection of their conditions by Philippine officials.

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