

16 SEP 2002

Police-Philippines

BUKIT AMAN TEAM GETS GREEN LIGHT TO MEET FILIPINA OVER RAPE CLAIM

By: Mohd Haikal Isa

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysian police have received permission from Manila to interview a 13-year-old Filipina in the Philippines over her claim that she was raped by a Malaysian policeman at an immigration holding centre in Sabah.

"We have just been informed by the Philippine embassy of the permission," Federal CID Deputy Director Datuk Musa Hassan said today.

"We will make the preparations which include submitting the names of our officers who will go there," he told Bernama when contacted.

Philippine Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said earlier today his government was giving the necessary clearance for Malaysian police to come over and interview the girl.

The interview may include the recording of a statement from the girl and formality of lodging a police report, Perez said in a statement issued in Manila.

Federal police recently set up a special team headed by CID Assistant Director (Special Investigations) ACP Takbir Ahmad Nazir to investigate the Filipina's rape claim.

The team, which includes officers from the federal police sexual crimes and legal divisions, is still in Sabah and will leave for Manila as soon as it completes investigations there and all preparatiions have been made, said Musa.

The 13-year-old girl was among tens of thousands of Filipino illegal immigrants deported from Malaysia recently.

Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo had written to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad asking for an investigation into the rape claim, and the Malaysian prime minister in his reply vowed to probe the allegation and punish anyone found guilty.

The Philippine ambassador to Malaysia, Jose Brillantes, confirmed that Manila had granted permission to a Malaysia police team to interview the girl.

"There is an urgency for them to conduct the investigation," he told Bernama. "I would like the team to accelerate the investigation as well as their departure to Manila."

Brillantes said the investigation must be carried out quickly "as both Kuala Lumpur and Manila are very clear about the matter".

-- BERNAMA

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