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Deported teen 'rape' victim a Malaysian

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KOTA KINABALU, Mon. - The 13-year-old whose allegations of rape while held at a detention centre for illegal immigrants prompted protests from the Philippine Government, is now believed to be a Malaysian.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai said the girl, whose parents have been traced in Sabah, would be brought here to facilitate investigations.

According to Norian, police recorded statements from more than 120 people here and in the Philippines. "We have reason to believe she is a Malaysian."

He was speaking at a Press conference after visiting the State Police Contingent Headquarters in Kepyayan today, where he was briefed about police preparations for the Gaya parliamentary by-election, the on-going Ops Nyah against illegal immigrants and illegal squatters, and the investigation into the girl's rape allegation.

He said a DNA test would be done to help ascertain the girl's background and nationality.

The girl, who was initially thought to be a Filipina, was deported to Bongao in Tawi-Tawi and later brought to Zamboanga where she was placed in the custody of the Philippines Welfare Department.

Upon her arrival in Bongao, the girl told authorities there she was raped by police officers at the detention centre here while awaiting deportation.

This led to a strongly worded letter from Philippine President Gloria Arroyo Macapagal to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad demanding an investigation.

A police team was sent to the Philippines to record a statement from the girl.

Norian said now that police had established that the girl was a Malaysian, police would seek the co-operation of the Philippine authorities to send her back to Sabah.

"We could hasten our investigation into her allegations of rape once she is back in Sabah," he said.

An identification parade would be arranged, he added, to enable the girl to identify the suspects.

On how the girl ended up being deported, Norian said she was categorised as an illegal immigrant as she did not have any identification documents when detained by police, who found her roaming the city without a proper place to live and sleep. Investigations also showed she did not attend school.

"When she was arrested she did not provide any information about her parents and where they lived," Norian said.