

07 JAN 2002

Mahathir-Misuari

DR MAHATHIR CONFIRMS MISUARI'S DEPORTATION

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 7 (Bernama) -- Nur Misuari, the former Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) governor who was detained in Malaysia last November for illegal entry, was deported to Manila today, the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad confirmed.

The former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) leader was deported together with six followers arrested with him on Nov 24 at Pulau Jampiras in Sabah waters off Sandakan.

Dr Mahathir however declined to elaborate when asked about Misuari's deportation at a news conference after addressing the third premier civil service assembly here today.

Misuari and the six followers fled to Malaysia after a failed uprising in southern Philippines.

Misuari's deportation was a week ahead of the Jan 15 scheduled date announced last week by Philippine President Gloria Arroyo.

He is likely to be charged with instigating a revolt in southern Philippines and face imprisonment up to 40 years upon conviction.

According to reports from Manila, Misuari was taken from Kuala Lumpur to Lipa City, about 80 km south of Manila aboard an air force C-130 transport plane and handed over to Philippine police officials by Malaysian authorities.

Through his lawyer Elly Pamatong, Misuari last week submitted a written request to the Malaysian government to allow him to apply for a visitor's visa to a third country, preferably the United States.

Misuari's reason for choosing the US was that the American Black Muslim leader Louis Farrakan has arranged for him a lecture tour to 41 American universities and to attend an Islamic Conference in Los Angeles.

Misuari had also applied to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) for political asylum.

-- BERNAMA

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