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Lawyer

M'SIAN LAWYER FOR ALLEGED RAPE VICTIM COMING TO MANILA

MANILA, Sept 12 (Bernama) -- A Malaysian lawyer hired by the Philippines to represent an alleged rape victim in Sabah is arriving here tomorrow, an official told reporters today.

Gordon Jones intends to take the testimony of a 13-year-old Filipino-Muslim girl who had complained she was raped by a Malaysian policeman.

The girl, whose identity was kept secret by authorities, was one of the Filipino deportees from Sabah.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez said that Jones would be accompanied by Philippine envoy to Malaysia Jose Brillantes.

"We will immediately have a conference with Mr Jones and I will hand over to him the affidavit of the victim," he said.

Perez said that there was "enough evidence" to prove the allegation of rape and that it was now "a matter of filing the appropriate charge in Malaysia."

Persida Acosta, chief of the Philippine Public Attorney's Office, said that she had interviewed the girl for almost six hours and found her testimony "spontaneous and credible."

The alleged rape victim has been under the care of social welfare officials in the southern city of Zamboanga since she was deported from Sabah last week.

President Gloria Arroyo, in a recent letter to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, expressed her "personal outrage" at the alleged rape and asked for "swift action" on it.

Meanwhile, Defence Secretary Angelo Reyes leaves tomorrow for Kuala Lumpur to help resolve the migrants' row.

He will meet his Malaysian counterpart and other key officials to find ways to smoothen the deportation of illegal Filipino migrants from Sabah.

-- BERNAMA

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