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Malaysia's role in Mindanao praised

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KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The Philippines has praised Malaysia for its role in pursuing peace in Mindanao.

This was amplified by Philippine Defence Secretary Angelo T. Reyes after meeting with his counterpart Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak at the Defence Ministry today.

"We particularly value the concurrence of Malaysia to stop any attempt at promoting violence and separatism among the various Muslim communities in Southern Philippines," said the five-point joint statement issued after the meeting.

Reyes read out the statement on behalf of both parties, while Najib later translated it into Bahasa Malaysia.

The other points reaffirmed the "close" and "warm" relationship between the two countries, which paved the way for Malaysia to act expeditiously in responding to concerns raised by the Philippines with regard to the repatriation of Filipinos.

References were made to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Philippine President Gloria Arroyo for paving the way for the relationship based on the excellent rapport shared by both of them.

"Malaysia will take the necessary action against those who are found to have breached the law based on the investigations currently being conducted," the statement said.

However, both countries agreed that the issue should not be sensationalised to the extent of jeopardising the existing good relationship.

On terrorism, Najib and Reyes said they were committed to fighting it in their countries and the region.

"Towards this end, the Malaysian and the Philippine Armed Forces will continue to build the existing close co-operation particularly in the border areas in order to eliminate all forms of terrorism."