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Philippines-Probe/BM

M'SIAN TEAM LEAVES FOR MANILA TO PROBE RAPE CLAIM

SANDAKAN, Sept 25 (Bernama) -- A team of police investigating officers and legal officers left for Manila today to investigate a 13-year-old Filipina's claim that she had been raped at a temporary holding centre (PTS) for illegal immigrants in Sabah.

Malaysian Ambassador to the Philippines Mohamad Taufik Mohamad Noor, who confirmed this, said they were expected to spend three days in the Philippines.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the Sandakan PTS, he expressed confidence that the Malaysian officers would get cooperation from the Philippine authorities to carry out a proper investigation.

"The embassy will not get involved in the investigation because this is the responsibility of the (relevant) authorities of the two countries. We also have not been told where the girl is at the moment," he said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has ordered a thorough investigation into the alleged rape following a complaint from the Philippine government.

Following that, the police set up a special team to handle the case.

On his visit to PTS in Sabah, Mohamad Taufik said he found that the inmates had been well treated by the authorities.

Contrary to claims by various parties in the Philippines, there was no mistreatment of immigrants at the centres, he said.

"The Philippines' Presidential Adviser on Muslim Affairs, Nur Jaafar, himself has said that the treatment was good but his statement is still doubted by certain quarters in the Philippines who tend to twist the facts," he said.

Nur Jaafar recently made a fact-finding trip to Sabah.

-- BERNAMA

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