

Nurul: Yes, I met Sulu 'princess' but ...

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PKR vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar has admitted to meeting with Jacel Kiram, the daughter of the late Jamalul Kiram III, but she vows support for defending the sovereignty of Sabah as part of the Malaysian federation.

Nurul Izzah said she was in the Philippines on Nov 9, together with party colleague Batu MP Tian Chua, as part of the PKR delegation to meet with various stakeholders there.

Her response comes as a deputy minister from Sabah urged her to apologise for a Facebook posting that carried a photograph of her dining with Jacel.

Jacel's father was the self-proclaimed Sultan of Sulu, who was responsible for an intrusion into Sabah in 2013.

The Facebook posting, uploaded by Jacel on Nov 9, showed both Nurul Izzah and Jacel at the dining table with at least two companions.

In her statement today, Nurul Izzah pointed out that she was hosted by the Council on Philippine Affairs and the Asian Institute for Democracy, the Office of the City Mayor of Manila and the Office of the Vice-President of the Philippines.

"They decided on the list of leaders who we were to meet," she said.

Among them, she said, were legitimate candidates contesting on Vice-President Jejomar Binay's ticket - and many other leaders from civil society.

Nurul Izzah explained that she had stressed her party's support for the Malaysian government's initiatives in the southern Philippines.

"I wish to reiterate my support in defending the sovereignty of Sabah as part of the Malaysian federation.

"Any suggestions otherwise are mere wild, unfounded and malicious allegations," she said.

Apart from Jacel, the others who were at the meeting included former governor and congressperson of Batangas Hermilando Mandanas, congresspersons Regina Reyes and Silvestre Bello, Dean of Law Amading Valdez, former member of the cabinet Romy Nery and former Undersecretary of Justice Wencie Andanar as well as members of the staff of the vice-president of the Philippines and the mayor of Manila.