

**Philippines To Seek Clarification On Kato's Status In Talks With MILF**  
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MANILA, Aug 22 (Bernama) -- The Philippine government (GPH) is set to bring up the issue of a former Moro rebel commander and his group amid their ouster as members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the resumption of the peace process in Malaysia on Monday, a senior government official said.

GPH chief negotiator Marvic Leonen said his panel is viewing with "serious concern" the developments regarding Ustadz Amiril Umra Kato and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), reports China's Xinhua news agency.

"We will be seeking clarification on the status of Kato and the BIFF from our counterparts in the MILF," he said as the three-day 22nd formal exploratory talks start on Monday in Kuala Lumpur, the third party facilitator in the peace process.

MILF vice-chairman for political affairs Ghazali Jaafar said that Kato and his group are no longer members of the MILF for their failure to go back to the folds of the group under the leadership of Al Haj Murad Ebrahim.

The 11,000-strong MILF, which has already dropped its secessionist bid, has been battling government troops in the southern Philippines since 1969 in one of Asia's longest-running insurgencies.

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