

Malaysia Does Not Intend To Interfere In Philippine Affairs
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From Nurqalby Mohd Reda

MINDANAO, Aug 29 (Bernama) -- Malaysia is fully committed to implementing the peace mission in the Philippines without any intention to interfere in the political affairs of the country, said Defence Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said the effort by Malaysia was as entrusted by the Philippine Government to assist the country in maintaining peace, following a ceasefire with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

According to him, the effort was not limited solely to security but also to develop the country's social economy.

"The conflict between the Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front resulted in the sufferings of the local community, and being left out of development, especially in Southern Mindanao.

"The involvement of Malaysia through an international-Mindanao monitoring team was aimed at maintaining lasting peace and political stability to attract foreign investors to the economic sector of the Philippines," he told reporters after a working visit to Mindanao here Wednesday.

Ahmad Zahid said, Malaysia's intention would be fulfilled if a peace agreement was signed between MILF and the Philippine Government at the end of this year.

"Last April, both parties discussed a 10-point agenda, including matters relating to the economic development of the country," he added.

The monitoring team had been implementing the peace mission since Sept 10, 2004 to ensure a ceasefire was adhered to.

Besides Malaysia, the peace monitoring team also comprised troops from Brunei, Indonesia, Japan, England and Norway.

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