

## **North Korea Suggests Joint Probe Into Murder Of Jong-Nam**

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 20 (Bernama) -- North Korea has proposed a joint investigation with Malaysia into the murder of Kim Jong-nam.

Its Ambassador to Malaysia, Kang Chol, said the proposal was being made after "so many questions and contradictions" had arisen from the ongoing investigation into the death of the half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

"If Malaysia agrees with our suggestion, we will despatch a delegation of lawyers to join the investigation with the Malaysian police," he said at a press conference at the embassy here today.

According to him, North Korea as the country of origin of the deceased, had the right to request investigation results, especially relating to allegations on how Jong-nam was murdered.

"There are allegations that the arrested female suspects murdered him using poison needles or by daubing his face with chemicals. We demand a meeting with the suspects to get to the truth," Kang Chol said.

On Feb 13, Jong-nam, who was estranged from his half brother, was at the KL International Airport 2 at 8am to board a flight to Macau when a woman suddenly covered his face with a cloth laced with what is believed to be poison.

Jong-nam, who was using a passport bearing the name Kim Chol, sought help at a customer service counter at klia2 and was rushed to the Putrajaya Hospital but died on the way.

Kang Chol claimed that the Malaysia Police had yet to ascertain the cause of death, and added that North Korea was still waiting for the evidence of the suspects.

Kang Chol, who referred to the deceased as Kim Chol throughout the press conference, said: "They (the Malaysian Police) rather focus on identifying (the dead man) by the .. name alleged by forces hostile to North Korea .. and are requesting the presence of his next of kin for identification and DNA tests to delay the release of his body.

"This apparently shows the investigation is not for the clarification of the cause of death and search of suspects, but it is out of political aim," he said.

Kang Chol said the deceased was a diplomatic passport holder which meant that the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations should be abided by.

He questioned the statement of Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi on Feb 17 identifying the dead North Korean as Kim Jong-nam.

"We submitted an official document that we did not know any other name except 'Kim Chol' as written in the passport to the Malaysian Police on the morning of Feb 18.

"How could the Deputy Prime Minister make such remarks one day before our submission (of the document)? This clearly suggests that Malaysia has close ties with the South Korean plotter in this incident," he said.

Kang Chol claimed that Malaysian plainclothes police raided the condominium of a North Korean here and "forcibly" arrested him without any warrant and evidence.

"They made it public that they arrested the mastermind before any form of inquiry began and they also aired on TV the scene that the suspect was arrested in fetters. This is a grave human rights abuse," Kang Chol said.

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