North Korea Sends Senior Official To KL Over Kim Jong-nam's Murder

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 28 (Bernama) -- North Korea has sent a senior official to Kuala Lumpur for discussions with Malaysian authorities on matters related to the murder of Kim Jong-nam, estranged elder half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

The official, North Korea's former ambassador to the United Nations Ri Tong Il, arrived today and declared: "From today, I will be the official spokesperson."

Speaking to reporters from the local and international media at a press conference at the compound of the North Korean Embassy here, he said his discussions would be on three matters.

He identified them as asking for Jong-nam's body to be returned to North Korea, the question of the detention of a North Korean by Malaysian police and the "friendly ties" between Pyongyang and Kuala Lumpur.

Tong Il also said that he hoped to settle the "humanitarian issue" that had emerged following the death of Jong-nam.

He, however, declined to say when he would meet with the Malaysian authorities or how long he would be in Malaysia.

It was not immediately known whether Tong Il had come alone or with a delegation.

Jong-nam was at the KL International Airport 2 (klia2) at 8am on Feb 13 to board a flight to Macau an hour later when two women suddenly appeared before him and wiped his face with the palms of their hands which contained what was later identified as the VX nerve agent.

Jong-nam sought help at a customer service counter at the airport and was rushed to the Putrajaya Hospital but died on the way. He had come to Malaysia on Feb 6 and carried a passport bearing the name Kim Chol.

Two women, one having an Indonesian passport and the other a Vietnamese travel document, were arrested following the murder. A Malaysian man and a North Korean man Ri Jong Chol were also arrested. The Malaysian has been released on bail.

The North Korean Embassy here has become a centre of media attention following the murder.

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