

## ASEAN meeting condemns Taliban

*by UPI*

MANILA, Philippines -- The ASEAN regional forum meeting in the Philippines on Thursday strongly condemned the Taliban killings of two South Korean hostages in Afghanistan. Foreign ministers of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, joined by top diplomats from several other nations at the Manila meeting, issued a statement on the hostage situation, calling for the immediate release of the 21 surviving hostages who were kidnapped July 19, Yonhap news agency reported. The ministers deplored "in the strongest terms" the killings of the two hostages and expressed hope the surviving hostages and their families "will soon be reunited," the statement said. The statement was read by Philippine Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo in his opening address at the forum, Yonhap said. In addition to the member nations, other countries represented at the meeting included South and North Korea, the United States, Japan, China, Russia and Canada.

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