

# Sabah's security cover extended

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KOTA KINABALU: Intelligence sources have revealed that the so-called Sulu Sultanate has appointed commanders in each State constituency in Sabah, heightening security concerns for the State, still traumatised by the Tanduo intrusion in 2013.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said this effectively means that the security threat is no longer confined to the east coast but had spread to all parts on the State, including the west coast and interior.

"This is not a joke. Security matter is no joking matter. This is a real threat to the nation. And as a result, the Ministry through the police, all units of our military and other security enforcement agencies, especially Esscom, will expand our operations and tighten security, not only in the east coast but the whole of Sabah," he said.

Zahid, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, was speaking at the opening the Security and Public Order Seminar at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Saturday.

While the security units in the country would fight to the end to defend the country, he said it would require a more holistic support from the people, a Total Defence Concept (Hanruh) to ensure that the sovereignty of the country is protected and preserved.

"The people of Sabah have already decided long ago that they wanted to be in Malaysia. So all those claims on Sabah should not arise anymore. Other countries or groups, those who call themselves sultanate, they no longer have the rights to claim Sabah," he said.

He added that the Government had put it into laws that would ensure any activity seen as a threat to the security in the country would be justly punished and to prevent any untoward action that could escalate into worse incidents.

Zahid said although the government had drawn up punitive laws such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015 (Pota) and Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (Sosma), it also should be preventive.

"Preventive laws mean that security issues cannot be compromised," he added.

Security is not just the responsibility of the enforcement agencies, he said, but also the people's duty to defend the motherland from threats either from the outside or the inside.

The omnipresence of security enforcement agencies and the existence of various laws aimed to prevent serious crimes against the sovereignty of the State is important, but the determination of the people is more important.

"If all our people realised that they also have the responsibility to defend the country, then it will go a long way in strengthening the existing security in this country. This is what we must nurture and instil into the minds and hearts of our people especially when Sabah is continuously threatened."

He commended the seminar as a way to identify and recognise the type of threats and ways to counter them and hoped that all the papers presented must not be confined among the academic circle but be put into practise and included in creating security policies for the good of the nation.

"We need to continue conducting this seminar. We want Esscom and UMS to work together to find ways on handling the security challenges not only in Sabah's waters but in the whole of Malaysia.

"We need to remember that the threat in the east coast was so bad but because of the presence of Esscom, led by its very capable commander DCP Datuk Wan Abdul Bari Wan Abdul Khalid, we have managed to control it," he said.

During the event, UMS also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Home Ministry which saw both parties agreeing to cooperate in the research field on crime, security and public order in Sabah.

The university was represented by UMS Vice Chancellor Datuk Harun Abdullah while the ministry was represented by its Secretary-General Dato' Sri Alwi Ibrahim, witnessed by his deputy Dato' Suriani Dato' Ahmad. According to Harun, the university had always rendered its assistance to the Ministry and the MoU is seen as a way to formalise the relation between the two parties.

"In ensuring the sovereignty of our country remains intact, we would require not only the cooperation from all parties, but also a good security management approach," he said.



Zahid, Musa and other leaders after the closed-door Umno meeting.