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Immigrants-Soldiers

SOLDIERS ABLE TO HELP POLICE STEM INFLOW OF ILLEGALS

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 24 (Bernama) -- The armed forces is ready to help police check the entry of illegal immigrants into the country, Armed Forces Chief Jen Tan Sri Ismail Omar said today.

He said the armed forces was capable of discharging this secondary duty apart from its main role of protecting the country from external aggression.

"This help will be given by the armed forces as and when it is needed," he told reporters after visiting the Armed Forces Academy in Sungai Besi here.

He was commenting on Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar's statement on Sunday that soldiers would be given auxiliary powers to help in police operations against illegal immigrants.

The proposal to enlist the armed forces' help in stemming the inflow of illegals was made at the National Security Council meeting chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct 17.

Jen Ismail said there was no need to give special training to soldiers required to help the police because all armed forces members were adequately trained in all aspects of security work.

"Such tasks are nothing new to us," he said.

He also said Tanjung Pengelih in Johor was among the locations being considered for siting the academy's complex.

The year-old academy had an important role to play in ensuring continuity of leadership in the armed forces, he said.

Jen Ismail said the academy's recruitment of cadets would be increased to 200 next year from 116 last year and 166 this year. -- BERNAMA

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