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Six more held for involvement in Shi'ite teachings

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KOTA KINABALU, Thurs. - Police have detained another six people for their involvement in Shi'ite teachings, bringing to eight people arrested under the Internal Security Act since Tuesday.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Rahim Noor today confirmed the arrests under the Act, which allows for detention without trial.

However, he declined to disclose the identities of the six or where they were being detained.

"All six, who are Malaysians, were arrested for spreading the teachings of the Syiah (Shi'ite) sect, and such activities could pose a danger to internal security," Rahim told reporters at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport.

The Press had approached Rahim to seek information on the arrest of two men - Abdullah Hassan, 80, who is a former Pas supporter, and Paharuddin Mustapha, 73, a former Parti Rakyat Malaysia member.

Abdullah was believed to have been picked up at his home in Pendang, Kedah, and Paharuddin at his house in Bukit Mertajam early on Tuesday morning.

Both were believed to be actively involved in Shi'ite teachings.

Last year, the Government had warned that it would take the necessary measures to check the spread of Shi'ite teachings, some of which had been identified as a threat to national security.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman had said in March last year that Shi'ite followers were taught to become fanatics.

"This is dangerous. Besides being a threat to national security, the ideology could also cause a split among Muslims here, who are followers of the Sunnah Waljamaah sect."

Hamid had cited the militancy of the Shi'ite movements in Bahrain, Lebanon and Pakistan where Muslims had been killed because of their disagreements with the teachings of the Shi'ite leaders.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is also the Home Minister, had also expressed concern with reports that Shi'ite teachings were being spread in the country.

In Alor Star, Hamid told reporters this evening that the police had acted against the eight people because they were considered a threat to national security.

"Police and the Islamic Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department had been monitoring the activities of the Shi'ite leaders and their followers for some time.

"Among the eight arrested in the past few days were a few actively recruiting followers especially among students of institutions of higher learning."

(END)