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Abdul Jawah arrives home in Semporna after 83 days

KOTA KINABALU, Thurs. - Finally, it is home sweet home for policeman Abdul Jawah Salawat who arrives in Semporna today after 83 days of captivity on the island of Jolo in southern Philippines.

He had arrived here on Monday after his release on Friday and was admitted to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for observation.

Having been given a clean bill of health, Abdul Jawah and his family boarded Malaysian Airlines flight MH2137 at 1.55pm at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport for Tawau today.

Among those who sent him off were National Security Sabah director Mustapha Ibrahim, State Special Branch deputy chief Superintendent Maliki Member, friends and relatives.

The journey to Tawau took about 40 minutes and from there Abdul Jawah and his family took about one-and-a-half-hours by road to reach home at Kampung Inaba, Semporna.

"My family will hold a kenduri (feast) this evening," Abdul Jawah told reporters.

Accompanying Abdul Jawan were his wife Norismah Musbani, daughters Sharifah Amunah and Mahani, son Hishamuddin, his father Salawat Januh and mother Asburah Paudin.

"I am happy to be reunited with my family but at the same time sad for the others who are still being held by the kidnappers," he said.

Abdul Jawah was among the 21 people kidnapped from Pulau Sipadan at gunpoint on April 23.

He thanked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Malaysian Government, Philippine Government and those who had helped to secure his release.

"I am extremely thankful to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister and all those who helped to secure my release," he said, adding that he was also thankful to the various organisations from Malaysia and the Philippines for the assistance and provisions such as medicine, food and clothing.

He also thanked State leaders, especially Chief Minister Datuk Seri Osu Sukam and ministers, for their concern and untiring support during his ordeal.

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