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Video-Sauk

DECISION ON SCREENING OF SAUK INCIDENT LIES WITH NSC

KUALA LUMPUR, July 25 (Bernama) -- It is up to the National Security Council (NSC) to decide whether a video recording of the Sauk incident should be played for public viewing, Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob said today.

The video recording might contain gruesome scenes, including on the bodies of two security forces members who were murdered, he said.

He said in response to journalists' suggestion that the government screen the videotape recorded by security forces in order to dispel PAS' allegations that the Sauk incident was stage-managed.

On July 2, members of the Al-Ma'unah robbed two army camps in Gerik of a huge cache of weapons before fleeing to their hideout in Bukit Jenalek, Sauk, near Kuala Kangsar.

The episode ended with the surrender of 27 members of the group on July 6 and deaths of one criminal and two security personnel who were taken hostage by the group.

Earlier, Khalil opened a briefing for officers of departments and agencies under the ministry at the National Institute of Public Administration (Intan) in Bukit Kiara here.

Khalil said the government had to explain to the people through the media, including an interview given by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on television, to counter PAS' lies which had undermined the credibility of the security forces.

"Now information officers throughout the country have been asked to explain to the people technical matters (on the Sauk incident) which have been disputed," he said.

Khalil chaired the briefing lasting almost two hours which was attended by 500 officers from throughout the country.

It also afforded participants a chance to air their views on the implications of the Sauk incident.

They also asked technical questions like those relating to the carrying of a substantial amount of weapons and ammunition in three Pajero vehicles, something which was disputed by the opposition.

In TANAH MERAH, Umno information chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said the information sessions conducted by the government had helped people to appreciate the seriousness of the Sauk incident.

"A White Paper on the incident will be issued soon, and with that everything will be known," he told reporters after meeting Tanah Merah Umno members today.

Mustapa said clarifications by the security forces, especially Army Field Commander Lt-Jen Datuk Seri Zaini Mohamed Said, clearly showed that the incident was not orchestrated by the government.

"To me, Jen Zaini's statement is very significant because he is a professional, a hero who has been serving the country for a long time. Surely we would not want to dispute the explanations of a professional," he said.

Zaini overpowered the group's leader after a meeting at their hideout, and this led to their surrender.

Mustapa also asked the authorities to arrest certain quarters who were still instigating the people to hate the government with their campaign of slander.

-- BERNAMA

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