

21 JUL 2000

Tiki-Iban

IBAN COMMUNITY PRAISED FOR NOT EXPLOITING MATHEW'S DEATH

By: Edward Steven Subeng

NANGA TADA (Kanowit), July 21 (Bernama) -- Deputy National Unity and Social Development Minister Dr Tiki Lafe today praised the Iban community for not making an issue of slain commando Mathew anak Medan's death.

He said this showed they treasured the existing racial harmony and unity in the country and knew of the consequences of acting emotionally.

Speaking to Bernama after calling on the late Mathew's family at their Rumah Meruan longhouse here, he said even Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohammad was concerned over Mathew's death.

Dr Tiki said the Prime Minister was especially concerned that a non-Muslim soldier had died a horrible death at the hands of a Muslim deviationist group.

Mathew, 25, who was attached to the 21 Commando regiment based in Terendah, Melaka, and police detective Sgn R.Sagadevan, 48, were captured in the course of carrying out their duties. They were tortured and murdered by the Al-Ma'unah group on July 3 in its jungle hideout in Bukit Jenalik, Sauk, Perak.

The group had earlier stolen a huge cache of high powered guns and amunitions from two army camps.

Dr Tiki advised Mathew's family and the Iban community to be patient as investigations were still on-going.

"The whole truth will be known when the case goes through the court process upon completion of the investigations," he said.

Mathew's father, Medan anak Nunjung, 61, in his meeting with Dr Tiki, expressed the hope that the federal and state governments would build him and his wife a house either in Sibuh or Kanowit in memory of their son.

"We have hoped to rely on our late son to look after us in old age as the rest of our grown-up children have their own families and are staying away from us," he said.

Dr Tiki, accompanied by Medan and his wife, Lundun anak Ngumbang, 57, later visited Mathew's grave at the family's pepper garden about two km from their longhouse.

--BERNAMA

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