

DPM: Hard to deport

'We need to step up border patrols

Nst - 3 JAN 2002

KEPALA BATAS, Sat. — The Government is facing problems in deporting some illegal immigrants since they do not carry proper identification documents, making it difficult to ascertain their country of origin.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said in such cases, countries refused to accept the illegal immigrants without proper identification papers or valid travel documents to

prove their nationalities.

Commenting on a group of Africans who escaped yesterday while being sent to a detention camp, he said some illegal immigrants would resort to all kinds of tactics to escape so that they could stay in Malaysia for as long as they wanted.

Speaking to reporters after chairing the Kepala Batas Umno division meeting in Bertam here, Abdullah said the issue of repatri-

ating illegal immigrants was a delicate matter and required the Foreign Ministry to discuss it with the respective countries.

Police have recaptured 132 Africans, bringing the total number of those under custody to 180. Another 15 illegal immigrants are still at large.

Abdullah said Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai had briefed him and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad

aliens with no papers

in northern States to stop illegals'

on the situation yesterday.

He said the majority of foreign nationals entered the country illegally through the Malaysia-Thai border.

"We need to step up our border patrols, especially in the northern States, he said, adding that the Government would discuss the matter with the Thai Government soon.

To a question, Abdullah said the Government welcomed foreigners,

including those from Africa, to visit or invest in the country.

"However, many come here illegally and the Government will not allow this. It is imperative we find ways to beef up our border patrols, including deploying more soldiers and other branches of the security forces," he said.

Asked if there was negligence on the part of the police in yesterday's incident, Abdullah said the matter would be investigated and disci-

plinary action would be taken against those who had been slack in discharging their duties.

It could have also been that our policemen were ill-prepared to face the Africans who can be very rough, and that they were prepared to do anything to remain in the country, he added.

He also suggested that the police should deploy the Federal Reserve Unit to tackle such problems in the future.