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Norian-JI

M'SIAN INTELLIGENCE LEADS TO HAMBALI'S ARREST

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 15 (Bernama) -- Intelligence which Malaysian police shared with their counterparts in neighbouring countries has led to the arrest of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) operations head Hambali in Thailand, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai said today.

However, he declined to disclose details of the intelligence reports that led to Hambali's arrest "one or two days ago".

"The intelligence agencies in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore are working for peace," he told reporters after presenting diplomas to graduates of a policing science course here.

Norian said Malaysian police would seek the cooperation of Hambali's wife, who is now in Thailand, in investigating the activities of Hambali in JI, a regional militant group.

A total of 45 officers, including two from the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA), one from the Prisons Department, two from the army and a police officer from Brunei attended the 2002/2003 course.

According to him, police are keen to get information from Hambali's wife because she is a Malaysian.

He confirmed that Hambali had operated in Malaysia before.

Norian said police believed they had crippled JI's infrastructure following the arrest of its key members.

Hambali, also known as Riduan Isamuddin, is said to be involved in the deadly bomb attack in Bali on Oct 12 last year.

Meanwhile, Norian said police viewed seriously incidents of "tontos" threatening or attacking law enforcers.

"If they are just trailing (enforcement officers), we cannot do anything unless they have bad intentions," he said.

Norian said this was not a new problem and that he had discussed the matter with state governments and his men at the contingent level several months ago.

He said this when asked what action police would take against "tontos" who resorted to violence.

The problem grabbed headlines again when several Petaling Jaya Municipal Council (MPPJ) enforcement officers were assaulted by tontos two days ago.

Tontos are people hired by operators of illegal businesses like pirated VCD sellers to keep track of the movements of enforcement officers.

Meanwhile, in Ezulwini, Swaziland, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, when asked on the capture of Hambali and whether he was happy because it was done with the assistance of Malaysian intelligence, said: "I will have to find out more about this thing because I'm not aware and I have not received detailed information."

"I am not really in a position to make any comments," he told reporters after meeting Sudanese President Lt Gen Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir on the sidelines on the Global 2003 Smart Partnership International Dialogue.

To another question as to how active Malaysia was in tracing Hambali, he said: "I don't know, I have to find out from those people handling this."

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