

20/05/2003

Sabah is safe, says police chief

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KOTA KINABALU, Mon. - Police have advised people not to be unduly alarmed at reports of so-called imminent terrorist attacks in Sabah as security in the State is well under control.

The State Commissioner of Police, Datuk Pahlawan Ramli Yusuff, said though there was no indication of terrorist attacks in the State, police had taken steps to heighten security.

"As far as we are concerned we have beefed up security and Sabah is safe," he told reporters here today.

The United States and several other countries issued travel advisories warning their citizens that terrorists linked to the al-Qaeda network may be planning attacks in Malaysia, particularly in Sabah.

"Our security forces are always on the alert," he said, adding that the people were safe and could go freely about their daily business.

He also said that the seizure of an assortment of ammunition and detonator caps from a boat in Pulau Lankayan about three weeks ago was not linked to terrorist activities.

The 22 people, including a woman, who were in the boat had also been released as police were satisfied they had genuinely drifted into Sabah waters due a problem with the out-board engine.

The suspects told police the ammunition and detonator caps were gifts for the wedding of an ex-Mayor on Taganak island in the Philippines.

Echoing Ramli's assurance, the Commander of the Fifth Infantry Brigade, Brig-Jen Datuk Yasin Yahya, said the security forces manning the border and coastal areas on the east coast were on full alert.

"Security has been placed on full alert round the clock," he said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had, during his recent visit to Sabah, said that the United States issued the advisory because it was afraid of its own shadow after having subjected many people to brutality.