

Sabah chief minister blasts Philippines on illegals
Malaysiakini.com
April 4, 2007

Sabah today accused the Philippines of hampering efforts to deport thousands of illegal Filipinos as local residents said their presence led to crime.

Sabah Chief Minister Musa Aman said Manila was not cooperating in accepting its nationals back, the state Bernama news agency reported.

"What I want to say here is that we will continue to round up the illegal immigrants in Sabah to ensure they are sent back to their home countries," Musa was quoted as saying.

"However, to repatriate them all is not easy because some countries, particularly the Philippines, have failed to give decent cooperation, causing the process to send their nationals back taking a very long time," he said.

Sabah shares a border with Indonesia and is separated by the narrow Sulu sea from the Mindanao region in the southern Philippines, which shares cultural ties with Sabah.

Robbery and rape

Officials say there are up to half a million illegals living in Sabah - mainly Muslim Filipinos and Indonesians who are engaged in local industries such as fishing, plantation and construction.

Malaysia has launched a number of mass deportations, and in June last year held high-level talks with the Philippines over what both sides said was the growing problem of Filipino migration.

"Police in all districts have carried out operations almost every day to trace and round up the illegal immigrants and hold them at the detention centres pending repatriation," Musa said.

But Patrick Sindu, president of the Consumers Association of Sabah, went further Wednesday, saying that the problem was "very serious" and accused many illegals of criminal activities such as robbery and rape.

"It is clear the Malaysia government has no political will to solve the illegal problem," he said.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/65485>