

Minister: Still safe to walk in Sibu streets
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A Sarawak minister has called the allegation that gangsters are running riot in the state an "exaggeration."

Describing Sibu as "still safe for people to walk around even at night", State Second Finance Minister Wong Soon Koh said the situation was a far cry from what Bintulu MP Tiong King Sing contended in Parliament last week.

"There are problems of course...everyone knows that, but not to the extent of people not feeling safe in the streets at night.

"To say otherwise is an overstatement," he was quoted as saying by the Borneo Post today.

Wong said Sibu is still "nice place to work and live in."

On Wednesday Inspector-General of Police Musa Hassan flew in to Sibu on an apparent show of force to get to the bottom of the gangster problem. .

Police said identified 16 secret societies operating in Kuching, Sarikei and Bintulu. Among the police officials that Musa met with was Sibu police chief Nicholas Sebastian, whom Wong defended.

"Last week, [our police chief] ACP Nicholas Sebastian came to see me to give me the latest report on Sibu's crime situation, but we normally do not disclose this.

Reveal their identities

"I am sure Sibu people will agree with me that he has done a good job. But the problems have been there over the years and are not his creation. Hence he is shouldered with a heavy burden to solve the compounding problems," he said.

Meanwhile, opposition DAP wants the police to disclose the identities of the politicians and businessmen being investigated for alleged involvement in gangsterism.

"Are they from the private sector or government departments? Are they politicians? And if they are, which party do they belong to? What posts do they hold at state or federal levels?" Sarawak DAP deputy chairperson Chiew Ching Sing (left) was quoted as saying by the Star today.

Chiew, also the state assembly person for Kidurong, said his party had raised such issues in 2002, adding that gangsterism flourished because of "poor police enforcement, poor top-level administration in the force and weak government machinery."

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