

Thai navy: M'sian vessels intercept migrant boat

MalaysiaKini.com

May 16, 2015

By Reuters

Malaysian vessels have intercepted a boat full of migrants after the Thai navy towed it out of Thailand's waters in the Andaman Sea, a Thai naval officer said on Saturday.

The boat was the same vessel the Thai navy towed back out to sea a day earlier, the officer aboard a patrol boat told Reuters. He declined to give his name.

The migrants told the Thai navy on Saturday they wanted to go to Malaysia, he said. The Thai navy had supplied the boat with food and fuel and fixed its engine before towing it out of Thai waters, he added.

Thousands of migrants are adrift in Southeast Asian waters, abandoned by people smugglers in the Andaman Sea following a Thai crackdown on human trafficking.

Their boats are being pushed back to sea as the governments in the region refused to take responsibility for the migrants from Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The International Organization for Migration has criticised authorities for playing "maritime ping-pong" with the migrants and endangering their lives.

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/298567>