

Migrant murders - blood on M'sian officials' hands

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The Home Ministry suspects Malaysian enforcement officers may have been complicit in, or even responsible, for the deaths of more than 100 migrants and trafficked people found buried in mass graves near the border with Thailand.

Asked whether the Malaysian officers may have murdered or caused the deaths of the migrants, Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi replied, "Yes."

"We are still investigating. We don't deny the possibility," Zahid (photo) added when reporters questioned him at the Parliament lobby today.

He also admitted that the enforcement officers may have disposed of the bodies.

Inspector-General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar admitted yesterday that Malaysia has uncovered 139 graves thought to contain the remains of migrants from Myanmar and Bangladesh, scattered around more than two dozen suspected human trafficking camps near the border with Thailand.

At least 37 individuals have been arrested in relation to the case.

The discovery of the graves comes weeks after 36 bodies believed to be of migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar were found in Thailand's southern Songkhla province.

A total of 26 bodies were discovered near an abandoned trafficking camp hidden deep in a jungle, close to Malaysian border.

May have international links

Meanwhile, Zahid said there is reason to believe the enforcement officers involved may have international links.

"From our investigation it shows that they are collaborating with each other, not only within local people, but they have international links, Thai, Bangladesh and Myanmar," he said.

However, the home minister did not say which agencies the officers were from.

Zahid said the ministry is working with the forestry department to assist with the investigations.

"We are working with the forestry department in terms of enforcement at the boundary between Thailand and Malaysia.

"They are supposed to enforce the area. I need to discuss this matter with the minister concerned," he said.

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