

Ransom not under police's jurisdiction, says Zahid
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Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said ransom was not negotiated by police to secure the release of the four Sarawakian hostages recently [released](#) by the Abu Sayyaf after 69 days of captivity.

"Some quarters says ransom was paid, so I would like to state here that in negotiations between police and kidnappers, there was no (mention) of payment made and ransom promised to secure the hostages' release.

"So on the allegation that ransom was paid, this is not within the jurisdiction of the relevant authorities, like police who represented the Malaysian government (in this case)," he is reported by *Utusan Malaysia* as saying.

Separately, deputy inspector-general of police Noor Rashid Ibrahim said he is unaware of any ransom paid to secure the release of the four.

"I don't know they paid ransom money; therefore, the best is to ask the family members," he told *Oriental Daily*.

According to *Bernama*, Noor Rashid said he cannot comment on this as he is not involved in the operation.

Family: We gave RM12m to SB to use for ransom

This comes after families of the four hostages said they passed RM12 million in ransom to two police special branch officers.

The money was passed in 12 metal boxes containing RM1 million each, at Hong Leong Bank in Sandakan on May 24, Lau Cheng Kiong, the uncle to hostage Johnny Lau told reporters in Sibu yesterday.

"All the money raised was handed to the relevant authority in Sabah handling the hostage situation," the *Borneo Post* reported Cheng Kiong as saying.

“The money was then left in the custody of the police.”

He said RM1 million were from mortgages on two homes in Pulau Li Huia, RM2 million from the shipping company where the hostages worked while the rest were public donations from Malaysia, China, Papua New Guinea, Taiwan and the Solomon Island.

The press conference was held after contributors queried the matter, following the four's release.

The four Sarawakian sailors were abducted by the Philippine-based militant group on April 1, from a tugboat off the coast of Pulau Ligitan, Sabah.

The four were Wong Teck Kang, Wong Teck Chii, Johnny Lau, and Wong Hung Sing.

The Abu Sayyaf group had reportedly demanded a ransom of RM18 million, and their families turned to members of the public for help.

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