

M'sia record improves in fight against human trafficking
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Malaysia has risen to Tier 2 of Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP) 2010 released by the United States Department of State.

Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein told Dewan Rakyat today he was informed of this via a letter from the United States embassy this morning.

"This is in recognition of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act 2007, creation of Anti-Human Trafficking Council and government action to address the issue," he told reporters at parliament lobby.

Malaysia dropped from Tier 2 to Tier 3 according to TIP Report 2009 issued on June 16 last year.

The TIP Report ranks countries based on their level of compliance on established minimum standards for the elimination of human trafficking.

Tier 1 countries are for governments that fully comply with minimum standards of the Trafficking Victims' Protection Act (TVPA).

Tier 2 countries for governments that not fully comply with the minimum standards but are making significant efforts to comply.

Tier 3 countries are for governments that do not fully comply with the minimum standards and are not making significant efforts to do so.

Earlier, replying to a question by Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong), Hishammuddin said 1,447 people were given interim protection order (IPO) under Section 44 (2) of Anti-Human Trafficking Act 2007 from Feb 28-May 30.

"Of the number, 338 were identified as victims of human trafficking and given protection order (PO) under Section 51(3) of the same act," he said.

Tan wanted to know problems faced by the government in tackling the issue and the number of human trafficking victims traced.

The government faced many challenges in efforts to check human trafficking as it involved transborder crimes with links to prostitution, drug trafficking and money laundering.

"Most victims entered this country as tourists but later got involved with human trafficking syndicates. Lack of public cooperation to provide information and threats by syndicates made victims scared to make reports."

Hishammuddin said internal and external factors also led to the prolonged situation.

"Transnational crimes occur in most countries including developed ones as it give a high return of US\$38 billion annually.

"Malaysia's rapidly growing economy attract foreigners to come here in search of jobs."

He said the government had implemented a mechanism to check crimes but lack of will on the part of source countries caused many people to fall prey to syndicate members.

- Bernama

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