

Malaysia-Thailand in coordinated border patrols
Malaysiakini.com
March 15, 2007

Malaysia and Thailand are conducting coordinated patrols along their border, Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said today as the neighbours intensify efforts to end worsening violence in southern Thailand.

"What we have are coordinated patrols, their people on their side and our people on our side. This has been ongoing," Najib told reporters.

"There is no such thing as joint patrols. Joint means you can cross over to each other's territory. No, we do not do that."

Thailand's army-installed Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont and Malaysian counterpart Abdullah Ahmad Badawi agreed last month to boost cooperation in a bid to end three years of separatist unrest in the south of the majority Buddhist kingdom.

Surayud said Friday that Malaysia had helped the kingdom make some progress in opening talks with Islamic separatists along their shared border.

"There was progress at the operational level, but I cannot disclose any details. However, we will expand cooperation with Malaysia into other possible areas," he said.

Escalating bloodshed

Malaysia has tightened border security since the Thai and Malaysian leaders met.

Despite the improved cooperation, violence has worsened.

Surayud on Thursday warned of escalating bloodshed in the majority-Muslim south but vowed to push ahead with his peace-building policy.

Nine Buddhists were massacred when their bus was ambushed Wednesday in the Thai south, while three Muslims died in a bombing.

About 2,000 people have already died since the insurgency erupted three years ago.

Thai government officials have long admitted they do not know exactly who they should talk to. The insurgents never claim responsibility for their attacks or make any specific demands.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/64552>