

Illegal immigrant problem our own making
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I refer to the Malaysiakini
MCPX
report Lenggeng riot: 'A disaster waiting to happen'.

It's happening in Malaysia and again, what a shame. How disgusting we Malaysians are watching it happen and letting it happen. Shame on us. I once saw a Rela raid when I was at a car wash. They rushed in with batons and literally began hitting these boys who obviously were trying to run away when they saw these Rela men charging in. Almost instantly the operation at the car wash came to a halt and we had to take our cars and leave. But the treatment meted out to these allegedly 'illegal' immigrants still remains fresh in my memory.

We are a civilised nation - or are we? We should be able to treat people with compassion. The only crime they have committed is to try and earn a living and there are compassionate ways to treat such people.

If there is no demand for illegal labour there can be no supply. So often the government has threatened to take action against errant employers but too often have they shut an eye and taken the easy way out by taking it out on this helpless lot. It is not only wicked, it is barbaric.

Quite a big portion of the blame for illegal immigrants goes to the authorities for not being able to stem the influx. Though it may be difficult to patrol our coasts, what about those who come by air? How are they let in? Why wasn't their status determined at the entry check points?

People from the Indian subcontinent require sponsors to come in. If they come to work there is a calling visa and the employer has to be on hand to receive them Is this being done?

If a foreign worker leaves his employer before the contract is up, the employer has to pay only about RM200 as a penalty to the immigration department. So what some unscrupulous contractors do when find the going tough is that they dump their foreign workers and then claim they have run away. It is the cheaper option.

Under the present system, certain people have been given a license to recruit foreign workers and then provide these foreign worker to local employers. The principle contractor is denied an approval to bring in the workers. He is not given employment passes for these people and as a result, the employer is charged up to RM150 a month for every foreign worker.

This worker is made to bear part of his levy from his earnings but the amount of money he gets is so meager he runs away for the illegal labour market where the earnings are better. He stays in slums, in newly blossoming squatter settlements, at the fringes of forests etc only to be hunted down like animals by the authorities.

What have we become? We tolerate this and we allow this to happen to our fellow human beings while we enrich ourselves at their expense.

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