

## **Raids to nab illegal foreign workers to begin soon**

**Malaysiakini.com**

**Mar 18, 2010**

The government plans to soon begin conducting surprise raids on shops and businesses to check on the welfare of foreign workers as well as weed out undocumented immigrants.

prisoner immigrants behind bars 220605The raids are to be conducted in the coming weeks by several agencies, including the Home Affairs Ministry, Labour Department, Immigration Department and police, Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein told the Star newspaper.

"This is to ensure that employers comply with labour requirements and to check human-trafficking activities," he was quoted as saying.

The government had earlier announced a nationwide crackdown on undocumented foreign workers scheduled for Feb 15, but the operation was deferred. Hishammuddin said a new date had yet to be set.

A total of 2.4 million foreign workers were recorded in Malaysia at the end of 2009 while the government estimated there are hundreds of thousands of undocumented immigrants.

Malaysia, which relies heavily on foreign labour for its agriculture and construction industries, has long struggled to contain the problem of illegal immigration.

In a bid to curb the rise in undocumented migrants, the country's laws prescribe whipping for offenders as well as locals found guilty of hiring illegal workers.

- dpa

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Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/126905>