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4 steps to ensure Esszone's safety

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STRATEGY: Najib cites stepping up info gathering, quick enforcement and interception; round the clock surveillance

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday outlined several measures that would ensure a strategic and tactical approach in the implementation of the Eastern Sabah Safety Zone (Esszone).

Speaking at the launch of the Eastern Sabah Security Command (Esscom), which is the enforcement agent of the Esszone, he said these included boosting intelligence gathering capability and stepping up round-the-clock coastal surveillance in the area.

"Thirdly, we need to increase our ability to quickly intercept any encroachment of our boundaries or waters.

"The fourth is enforcement. If any threats reach our shores, then there must be a swift move to capture them effectively.

"With these approaches, I hope the people, especially here (in Sabah's east coast), will continue to feel safe.

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"The goal is to ensure that their safety is fully assured and their lives can return to normal."

Datuk Seri Najib Razak

The briefing by Esscom director-general Datuk Mohammad Mentek, who is Sabah Immigration director, was held after Najib conducted a symbolic launch of the Esscom headquarters at the police marine base here.

Present were Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman and Sabah Police Commissioner Datuk Hamza Taib.

Najib said the government's sin-

lives can return to normal," he said after attending a special closed-door briefing on Esszone.

cerity in ensuring security and the safety of the people was reflected in its decision to set up Esscom within 24 hours.

He added that the government managed to ensure Esscom became operational within a month of announcing its formation.

He announced that 100 auxiliary police members would be appointed to oversee security at Felda Sahabat, with funds from the Felda management. Four platoons of the territorial army (Askar Wataniah) will be created in Felda Sahabat.

Najib said the seven new police stations announced under Esszone were also expected to be operational in a few days, with additional security from General Operations

Force personnel.

The seven stations are in Tambisan, Tanjung Labian, Cenderawasih Felda Sahabat in Lahad Datu, Pulau Bum Bum and Pulau Mabul in Semporna, as well as Pulau Gaya and Pulau Banggi.

At another function later, Najib warned that Malaysia would respond with all its might to any threat to its sovereignty by followers of the Kiram family.

"If any of their supporters breach the borders and enter our country to help the remaining intruders here, they will receive the same fate as the others.

"Our message is clear. We will do everything within our means to protect our country, our people and

make sure it is safe," he said to an enthusiastic crowd of about 5,000, comprising security personnel and local residents at the Desa Kencana Hall at Felda Sahabat.

Najib was speaking during an appreciation ceremony for those involved in Ops Daulat, launched following the armed intrusion by followers of the Kiram clan from southern Philippines.

Najib announced various assistance for families of the 10 fallen heroes, the injured and those made homeless after the intrusion near the Felda Sahabat area on Feb 12.

Among others, the government will rebuild the houses of residents in Tanjung Labian destroyed during the intrusion.



Datuk Seri Najib Razak, accompanied by Esscom director-general Datuk Mohammad Mentek (on his right), visiting Esscom headquarters in Lahad Datu yesterday. Bernama pic