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PRIME NEWS



Villagers of Tanjung Batu and Tanjung Labian fleeing after sightings of intruders yesterday.

2 villages made 'red zones'

NST-5/3/2013

COASTAL AREAS: Armed intruders spotted in Tanjung Batu and Tanjung Labian

LAHAD DATU

TANJUNG Batu and Tanjung Labian have been declared as "red zones" following the sighting of armed intruders in the coastal villages.

Sabah police commissioner Datuk Hamza Taib confirmed this development yesterday as scores of villagers were seen leaving their homes.

These two villages, situated next to each other, are 7km away from Kampung Tanduo, where Royal Sulu Army members have been holed up since arriving on Feb 12.



In Kampung Tanjung Batu, villager Abdul Hassan, 55, claimed he saw about 60 people, some carrying firearms, approaching the village. Seeing this, the villagers fled.

"They were in civilian clothes and came out from the plantation area. I have never seen them before and I believe they are part of the group of intruders," he told the *New Straits Times*.

Abdul, who left the village at 8am, said he was talking with friends at the beach when others informed them of the intrusion. He said he wanted to go back for

his family, who were still in the village, but was afraid.

Another villager, Lodokus Laku @ Aldo, 33, said one of the gunmen came to his house and identified himself as "Haji Musa".

"He had a weapon and was wearing a songkok.

"He told me that they had come to negotiate with the police. He was tall and well-built.

"He greeted me and shook my hand," said Lodokus, who added he got out of the house and left the area.

He also expressed concern about the safety of his family members, who were still in the village. He claimed he saw about 130 people, some of whom were armed.

The incident had also caused panic among Kampung Tanjung Labian villagers, who had evacuated their homes.

Checks revealed that many houses in this village were vacant, with only a few residents remaining.

The NST was told that the villagers had started leaving their homes on Sunday night.

A resident there, Mansur Malik, 48, said villagers left their homes because they were afraid. He did not leave as there was no evacuation order.

"Someone needs to take care of the houses. I am not afraid," he said, showing off his hand-made samurai sword.