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PRIME NEWS

Bodies of 22 terrorists found

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RED ZONE SECURED:
Security forces resume mopping up and search ops

LAHAD DATU

SECURITY forces yesterday retrieved 22 bodies of Sulu terrorists from Kampung Tanduo and Semporna in a sure sign that the authorities have almost secured the coastal village which was one of the red zones in Felda Sahabat.

Kampung Tanduo was the first village where the terrorists had set up camp since arriving here on Feb 12. The village had also been heavily bombarded by airstrikes and mortar rounds in *Ops Daulat* which began a week ago.

Sabah police chief Datuk Hamza Taib said mopping and search operations were continuing in Felda Sahabat to allow displaced residents to return to their homes in the affected villages.

"We are close to securing Kampung Tanduo and the operations are now more focused in Tanjung Batu and Sungai Bilis," he said of the two areas where the terrorists were believed to be hiding in.

He said 16 bodies were retrieved from Kampung Tanduo and Tanjung Batu while the rest were from Kampung Seri Jaya Simunul in Semporna where six policemen were gunned down in an ambush on March 2. Hamza said forensic investigations would be carried out on all 22 bodies, including on a dead terrorist referred to as "General Haji Musa".

A team, led by the police's Forensics Department chief Superintendent Hussein Omar Khan, will conduct the investigations while the post-mortem will be headed by a team of pathologists led by Penang Hospital Forensics



Security forces on patrol in Kampung Senallang as part of *Ops Daulat* to comb villages for terrorists in Semporna.



Sabah police chief Datuk Hamza Taib (left) briefing the media with Division 1 Sabah and Sarawak commander Major-General Mohd Zaki Mokhtar.

Department head Datuk Dr Zahari Noor.

The bodies were placed inside the district hospital's mortuary

where the forensics team and pathologists will conduct the investigations. To date, 18 bodies had been sent to Lahad Datu and

four others to Tawau Hospital.

More bodies are expected to be retrieved as the death toll of the terrorists now stands at 54. He also said 97 were arrested on suspicion of having links with the terrorists while 122 were nabbed for breaching the area of operations.

Hamza also said the number of security forces personnel injured was five following the latest shooting of two General Operations Force members over the weekend. Since the stand-off began, eight policemen were killed.

Hamza also stressed that the security forces had performed their duties professionally. He said the Malaysian troops were well-trained and were not pressured despite the loss of their comrades in the last two weeks. Hamza was

answering questions on the teenager who was killed by security forces in Sungai Bilis over the weekend.

"There maybe a lot of assumptions but the fact remains that the teenager and an adult, who was injured, were in a no-entry zone.

"I don't think pressure had anything to do with it. We are professionals and are well-trained."

Hamza also assured that the situation in Semporna and Lahad Datu had returned to normal.

At the moment, security forces are focusing their attention in Tanjung Batu and Sungai Bilis.

Hamza advised the public and the media not to enter those areas as there was a possibility that several terrorists were still holed up there.

