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NEWS

2 red zones cleared of terrorists

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SECURED: Security forces to scour Kampung Tanduo, Sungai Nyamuk for booby traps

LAHAD DATU

THE two red zone areas of Kampung Tanduo and Sungai Nyamuk here have been declared free of terrorists.

Sabah police commissioner Datuk Hamza Taib said security forces had cleared the two zones and had ensured that there were no remaining terrorists in the areas since yesterday.

"We have, however, placed our

security forces there to secure these areas so that they remain free of terrorists.

"We want to ensure they do not return," said Hamza yesterday. Present was Armed Division 1 commander Maj-Gen Datuk Ahmad Zaki Mokhtar.

Hamza said police would meet with community leaders to discuss the right time for displaced villagers to return home.

"However, this will also depend

on the situation in Tanjung Batu, Tanjung Labian and Sungai Bilis.

"Operations are now focused on Tanjung Batu and we expect it to be completed by tomorrow (today).

"We will also ensure that the terrorists have not left behind booby traps before allowing the villagers to enter the areas."

He said the remaining terrorists were now moving in small groups and there could be fewer than 50 of them lurking in the area.

"We cannot confirm their whereabouts as yet, but we will track them down, be it in or out of the

operation areas."

More than 200 terrorists had been holed up in Kampung Tanduo since their intrusion into Sabah on Feb 12. It was at this village that the authorities had attempted to negotiate with the gunmen to lay down their weapons.



However, when the gunmen did not comply, the Malaysian security forces sent in an air strike on the village, which

marked the beginning of Ops Daulat on March 5. Since then heavy fighting was reported in the village and surrounding areas.

Meanwhile, security forces arrested a man believed to be one of the terrorists about 6.30am yesterday. He was found in Felda Sahabat. No weapons or identity documents were found on him.

To date, 104 people have been arrested under the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 for alleged involvement with the terrorists and 232 others under the Immigration Act and Corrosive and Explosive Substances and Offensive Weapons Act.

Since the crackdown on March 1, security forces had gunned down 61 terrorists while 10 Malaysian security personnel were killed and nine others injured.