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NEWS

REPORTS BY LEE SHI-IAN, AVILA GERALDINE, MUZLIZA MUSTAFA AND ELIZABETH ZACHARIAH



Members of the armed forces wading through swamps using canines to track Filipino intruders during the mopping up and search operations in Kampung Tanjung Labian. Pic courtesy of armed forces (Inset) A family from Kampung Perumahan Kilang Sawit Permata Kembara Sakti Felda Sahabat 43, joyfully returns home yesterday from an evacuation centre Pic by Fathil Asri



Leader of intruders, local caught

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RUDDERLESS: Two were key players in invasion, says deputy IGP

LAHAD DATU

SECURITY forces have crippled the Sulu armed intruders following the capture of their leader and a local who was supplying them with basic necessities, in the last 24 hours. Both men were arrested together with their wives. Deputy Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar said with the arrests, police believe the group was now bereft of local support and proper directions from their leaders.

He said the group's military commander and the local who was responsible for the gunmen's food, accommodation, transportation and medical needs, were nabbed in two separate operations.

Khalid said the two men were

also key players in Jamalul Kiram III's group of 200 gunmen who had invaded Lahad Datu a month ago.

The group's leader, Agbimuddin Kiram, is believed to have deserted the group earlier this month and fled to southern Philippines.

Khalid said the local man was nabbed in Felda Sahabat at 10pm on Friday.

The group's military commander, identified as Datu Amirbahar Hushin Kiram, 50, a member of the Kiram clan and his wife, Gina Taves Kiram, 47, were nabbed at a swampy area in Kampung Sri Melor Bugaya, Semporna, about 1.30am yesterday by a police commando team, acting on a tip-off.

Police seized two laptop bags containing three handphones, a Western Union card, a SIM card, a

broadband, a memory card, a transparent file containing documents related to the Sulu Sultanate and signed by Sultan Islam Dalus Kiram II, RM3,000, one Brunei dollar, one Saudi Riyal and one Chinese yuan from the couple.

With the latest arrests, security forces have now nabbed 408 suspects since Ops Daulat was launched 20 days ago.

They also retrieved 38 bodies of the gunmen from Felda Sahabat, eight of which were taken out on Friday.

"We believe it will not be long before the evacuees return to their villages," he said yesterday.

Earlier, Khalid said the security forces in Felda Sahabat will not leave until the area had been completely cleared off the armed intruders. He said there had been sightings of the intruders in various locations.

"We cannot leave until we are completely sure the area has been secured and cleared of enemies. Only then will it be safe for the

villagers to return.

"There have been instances where we found weapons which had been buried, presumably to be collected at a later time," he said.

Police believe that most of the gunmen have discarded their attire and weapons, donning civilian clothes to blend in with the local population.

Another issue which is causing the security forces concern is the alleged sightings of gunmen beyond the operations (red) zones.

Khalid advised the public not to listen to rumours and panic as the situation was under control. He said security forces were meticulous in conducting the mopping operations.

It is understood that the residents of Embara Sakti panicked when they heard rumours that the armed gunmen were descending on their village.

Some of the residents were found packing their bags and preparing to move out.

