

Newspaper	New Straits Times
Date	26/3/2013

PRIME NEWS

REPORTS BY V. SHUMAN, ROY GOH, V. ANBALAGAN, HARIZ MOHD, ADRIAN DAVID, ROZANNA LATIFF AND AISYAH SULAIMAN

# 'We'll prevent another incursion'

NST-26/3/2013

**POLICE DAY:** Najib spends emotional day with families of cops killed in Lahad Datu

KUALA LUMPUR

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak could not have chosen a better occasion to announce the establishment of the Eastern Sabah Safety Zone (Esszone) than yesterday.

The setting was the Police Training College at Jalan Semarak here and the occasion was the 206th Police Day. And among those present were the families of the eight policemen killed battling the armed Sulu intruders in the east coast of Sabah.

The emotional side of the prime minister and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, were evident when they met the families of the dead policemen and presented them with posthumous promotion letters of their loved ones. Najib and Rosmah were clearly moved. Battle-hardened commandos also wept openly with their fallen comrades' wives.

Before that, Najib assured the nation that the government was doing everything it could to prevent a recurrence of the incident that claimed the lives of 10 security personnel.

He told the crowd that Esszone covered 10 districts from Tawau to Kudat. It would have seven new police stations and seven battalions of army and police personnel to protect the 1,400km coastline. More than 1.4 million people will benefit from this initiative.

Esszone will also entail relocat-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, accompanied by Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar, inspecting the guard of honour in conjunction with the 206th Police Day at Pulpal, Kuala Lumpur, yesterday. Pic by Syarafiq Abd Samad



ing water villages along the coast, inhabited by thousands of illegal immigrants, stateless people and several locals, to settlements to allow for close monitoring.

As Najib delivered his speech, six cabins that will serve as the temporary command centre for the Esszone, were being assembled at the Marine Police Complex in Lahad Datu. Five battalions of security forces are in Esszone while two more will be sent there soon.

This showed that the government was serious about ensuring the safety of Sabah folk.

Later, Attorney-General Tan Sri

Abdul Gani Patail said Esszone was proof that the government recognised that eastern Sabah had a security problem, but one which the government could handle.

He also vowed to bring to justice the key player responsible for the havoc caused in the past two months in Sabah. This included the brother of Jamalul Kiram III, Abgimuddin Kiram, who had fled to the southern Philippines.

Gani said they were building a case against the arrested intruders, including the commander, Datu Amir Bahar Hushin Kiram, who was nabbed with his wife in Semporna on Saturday.

The operation to weed out the remaining intruders in Felda Sahabat was still going on although Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein claimed that it was reaching its tail end.

Armed forces chief Gen Tan Sri Zulkifeli Mohd Zin echoed Hishammuddin, saying that the operational tempo of the security had dropped as the threat from the armed intruders receded.

One of the reasons for this was that villagers in the former red zone areas were coming forward with information that had led to the arrest of more than 100 intruders.

**Page 1 pix:** (Clockwise, from top right) Members of the police special forces in action in Semporna recently; the prime minister and his wife are moved at the 206th Police Day celebration in Kuala Lumpur yesterday; Rosiah Dahlan holds her husband's posthumous award; Jabah Mingku, whose husband Michael Padel was killed in Semporna, wiping away a tear; Mohd Szreen remembers the sacrifice of his father, Corporal Salam Togiran; and Inspector Mazlan Mohammed breaks down as he meets Noraziah Nor, widow of Inspector Zulkifli Mamat.