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# Don: Sabah is **not** the sultanate's

The Star - 6/3/2013

## History can't be turned back, says historian

**PETALING JAYA:** The Sulu Sultanate cannot turn back the pages of history to reclaim Sabah, said prominent historian Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Khoo Kay Kim.

If such a precedent was to be set, then Singapore should be returned to Johor and Penang to Kedah, he said.

"Their (Sulu Sultanate's) claims are difficult to come to terms with as what has been accepted for such a long time cannot be changed," he added.

"Even if the matter is taken to the International Court, Malaysia would have a better chance of winning as Sabah had been part of the country for a long time."



Prof Khoo said that although the state was originally part of Sulu, the British North Borneo Company had taken control of North Borneo, now known as Sabah, in 1882.

He said transmigration of Filipinos into Sabah had been ongoing as they

felt they belonged to this part of the region although the Malaysian authorities regarded them as illegal immigrants.

"I am surprised why they resorted to arms this time around," he said.

Institute of Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore Studies director Prof Kamarulnizam Abdullah said the Sulu Sultanate should honour previous agreements in which they ceded the territory to the colonial powers.

"We have inherited agreements made in the past," he said, adding that social media users and the

Opposition in both Malaysia and the Philippines appeared to be provoking the situation in Sabah.

"They appear to be politicising the situation to discredit the governments of the two countries," he said, adding that the people should reject those who put politics before national sovereignty and security.

In **JELEBU**, Information, Communications and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said that based on international law, Sabah legally belonged to Malaysia and the state and any part of it cannot be claimed by any party.

He cited the Cobbold Commission 1963 findings that the majority of Sabahans agreed for their state to be part of the Federation of Malaysia.

(The commission, headed by former Bank of England governor Lord Cobbold, was also responsible for the drafting of the Federal Constitution prior to the formation of Malaysia).

Speaking to reporters after attending an event with prisoners and narcotics rehabilitation centre inmates, Rais said Sabah's entry into Malaysia was a nation-building move and the state's territory could not be claimed by any party after that.