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> Reports by P.K. KATHARASON, MUGUNTAN VANAR, RUBEN SARIO, PHILIP GOLINGAI, SHAUN HO AND STEPHANIE LEE

Hunt still on for Sulu terrorist chief

Whereabouts of Azzimudie still in doubt following reports he fled back home

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LAHAD DATU: Questions as to the whereabouts of Sulu terrorist leader Azzimudie Kiram persist even as security forces continue their hunt for the remnants of the armed group estimated to be 50 individuals.

Sabah Police Commissioner Datuk Hamza Taib said that while information and intelligence reports pointed to Azzimudie fleeing back to his native Southern Philippines, security forces were continuing their hunt for the brother of the self-proclaimed Sulu Sultan Jamalul Kiram III.

"If we find him here, we will arrest him," Comm Hamza said a day after Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar and Armed Forces chief Tan Sri Jen Zulkifeli Mohd Zin said Azzimudie had fled to his homeland.

The Kiram family in Manila, however, insisted that Azzimudie was still in Sabah as they were still keeping in touch with him through his Malaysian cellular telephone number.

"Azzimudie is also wanted in the Philippines, so if they catch him they will charge him there," said Comm Hamza.



Reports indicated that Azzimudie had fled sometime on Tuesday or Wednesday to one of the southern most islands of Simunul, located some 30 minutes by speed boat from Tanjung Labian in the Felda area.

Meanwhile, security forces expect to wind up their operations at Kampung Tanjung Batu by today and they would then discuss with local community leaders as to when the villagers could return home.

Army Division 1 Commander Mejar-Jeneral Mohd Zaki Mokhtar reported that mopping up operations in Kampung Tanjung Batu found no signs of the terrorists remaining in the area.

Security forces also released new pictures of items seized from the



Ongoing operation: Security forces personnel combing a plantation in Lahad Datu. Some of the items that were seized and recovered from the Sulu gunmen include identification tags (left) and clothing and weapons (bottom).

Sulu terrorists, including identification tags belonging to a "general" identified as Haji Musa.

Among the items recovered were tags bearing the words "General Headquarters" and "Royal Security Force" and the belongings of one Musa A. Abdullah holding the rank of vice chief of staff.

The other items include various articles of clothing, knives, guns, ammunition, mobile phones, chargers, toiletries and other personal items.

Comm Hamza said there had been no skirmishes between security forces and the terrorists over 72 hours as of 5pm yesterday.

