

'WE'LL DEFEND SOVEREIGNTY OF SABAH'

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Malaysia will not bow to the Philippines' claim on Sabah, says prime minister

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MALAYSIA will remain steadfast in protecting the sovereignty of Sabah following a recent move by the Philippines to include the Sabah map in the passports it issued.

In expressing the government's stand, Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin firmly said Malaysia would never concede to the Philippines' continuous claim on Sabah.

"We will not bow to this claim. Sabah remains in Malaysia and it is an integral part of our country.

"There should be no attempts to take Sabah out of Malaysia or attempts by anyone to claim Sabah as part of their region.

"We will never allow that and we will fight to defend Sabah to the very end."

He was speaking at an event at the Sabah International Convention Centre here yesterday.

He said security along Sabah's sea borders would be intensified to prevent the intrusion and entry of illegal immigrants.



Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin receiving a souvenir from Sabah Federal Secretary Datuk Samsuni Mohd Nor at an event with government servants at the Sabah International Convention Centre in Kota Kinabalu yesterday. With them is Agriculture and Food Industry Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ronald Khande. BERNAMA PIC

He said the government was committed to efforts to deport illegal immigrants back to their countries of origin.

Recently, the Philippines' House Committee on Foreign Affairs approved a substitute bill requiring the printing of the country's map, including its 322km exclusive economic zone and Sabah,

on Philippine passports.

Cagayan de Oro representative Rufus Rodriguez reportedly said the move requiring the printing of the country's map on passports was aimed at emphasising and insisting the Philippines' victory on the West Philippine Sea over China in the International Arbitral Tribunal at the Hague, the Nether-

lands, and its legal as well as historical rights over Sabah.

Later at a meeting with 1,500 members of the People's Volunteer Corps (Rela) at Universiti Malaysia Sabah here, Muhyiddin said Malaysia would never let its guard down when it came to sovereignty issues.

"Although Sabah is peaceful,

we will continue to keep our borders safe. The Eastern Sabah Security Command will continue to operate, with improved assets amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The Immigration Department has taken action against those coming into the state illegally and will deport them."

He said the federal government acknowledged the role of Rela in preventing the spread of Covid-19.

"Whether it's safeguarding public order, distributing food, providing assistance, as well as ensuring that people adhere to standard operating procedures (SOP), these are all appreciated by the government.

"Yesterday (Friday), I announced the extension of the Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO) until the end of the year. I am sure Rela personnel know what to do."

Present were Home Minister Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin, his deputy, Jonathan Yasin, and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Mohd Zuki Ali.

Muhyiddin said with the extension of the RMCO, he hoped Rela would continue to ensure that the community followed guidelines set by the Health Ministry.

"Rela personnel are one of the best ways for the government to foster unity among the people.

"I hope Rela will continue to play its role in maintaining peace and harmony in the country," he said, adding that there were more than three million Rela personnel in the country.

Muhyiddin announced a RM10 million allocation for uniforms for Sabah Rela members.