



BOAT ARRIVALS

PM: ROHINGYA WON'T BE SENT BACK TO SEA

Govt will look for a solution, says Muhyiddin

KUALA LUMPUR

MALAYSIA will not send illegal immigrants back out to the sea, including the 300 Rohingya refugees who arrived at the country's border in a boat in June last year.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said the government would instead look for a way to resolve the issue.

"The government has no plans to send Rohingya immigrants back out to the open sea," he told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

He was responding to a ques-

tion by Datuk Liew Vui Keong (Parti Warisan Sabah-Batu Sapi), who asked the prime minister if the government planned to send the 300 Rohingya back out to sea.

Apart from the 300 refugees, it was reported that in June last year, 269 Rohingya arrived in Malaysia illegally, while another 252 arrived in March this year.

Muhyiddin said the authorities were investigating the two incidents from the security aspect, including human trafficking, lack of legal travel documents and if there were any elements of organised crime.

He said the Rohingya might be allowed to remain temporarily in Malaysia until they could either be relocated to a third country or returned to Rakhine State in Myanmar once the situation improved.

This, he said, was subject to findings which showed that the

refugees needed international protection based on the principle of non-refoulement, as well as standards of exemption by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

He said the Human Resources Ministry had been tasked with heading a committee to look into the issues related to allowing refugees to work in the country.

"The policy decision on this matter will be announced once the government has done meticulous research on the viability of the programme, as well as its impact on our citizens."

He was responding to Chan Ming Kai (PKR-Alor Star), who wanted to know the status on allowing refugees to work in Malaysia, as well as the content of the proposed policy.

Refugees who carry the UNHCR card are allowed to work in in-

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Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin during the Dewan Rakyat sitting in Parliament on Monday. BERNAMA PIC

formal sectors to earn an income.

"However, the Gardenia company is currently employing 93 Rohingya refugees under its Projek Rintis Kebenaran Bekerja," said Muhyiddin.

Meanwhile, he rejected claims by several quarters that during the Pakatan Harapan administration, Tabung Haji (TH) was "controlled by non-Muslims".

"The position of Tabung Haji assets up to June 30, as announced in the TH performance report, is RM78 billion with surplus assets against its liabilities of

RM1.9 billion.

"In line with the implementation of the TH restructuring and recovery plan, non-performing assets were moved to a special purpose vehicle company, Urusharta Jamaah Sdn Bhd, which is fully owned by the government under Finance Ministry Incorporated.

"Therefore, TH is not being controlled by non-Muslims."

He was responding to a question by Datuk Seri Mujahid Yusof Rawa (Parti Amanah Negara-Parit Buntar), the former religious affairs minister in charge of TH.