

'WE WON'T ENTERTAIN CLAIMS TO SABAH'

PM: Demand by alleged descendants of Sulu Sultan is invalid, in violation of law

NURADZIMMAH DAIM
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

MALAYSIA has reiterated that it will not entertain any claim to Sabah, which has been recognised as part of the federation since Sept 13, 1963 by the United Nations and the international community. As such, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said the government would not entertain any claim from any quarters involving Sabah. He said the government viewed the issue of the nation's

sovereignty seriously, including Sabah's sovereignty stability.

"The demand by parties claiming to be the descendants of Sulu Sultan against the Malaysian government through an international arbitration is invalid and violates the law.

"This is due to the revocation of arbitrator Dr Gonzalo Stampa's appointment by Madrid High Court on June 29 last year. Hence making all actions and decisions made by Dr Stampa null and void, including the final award issued on Feb 28," Ismail Sabri said in a statement yesterday.

Despite having his appoint-

ment revoked, Dr Stampa had dismissed the ruling by Madrid High Court by transferring the arbitration to Paris, France, and pursuing the process where a final award was made, he said.

In ensuring Malaysia's sovereignty and interests remain protected, Ismail Sabri said, the government had applied to the court in France to set aside the award on March 3.

This, he said, was to ensure that final award could not be enforced by the claimant at any time and in any country so that Malaysia would not pay the US\$14.9 billion (RM62.59 billion)

compensation as claimed.

"In this matter, the Malaysian government remains committed to resolving the issue entirely and conclusively."

Ismail Sabri said the government would not budge, even an inch, in protecting and defending the country's sovereignty and Sabah state's position in Malaysia would forever be defended.

Malaysia previously rejected the purported final award of US\$14.92 billion to be paid to the so-

called heirs of the last Sultan of Sulu, Sultan Jamalul Kiram II, saying that it did not participate in the supposed arbitra-

tion proceedings that led to the award.

It had said the claim was based on an 1878 agreement between Sultan Mohamet Jamal Al Alam, the Sultan of Sulu at the time with Baron de Overbeck and Alfred Dent that contained no arbitration agreement.

The Kota Kinabalu High Court had in 2020 ruled that Malaysia was the proper venue to resolve disputes arising from the 1878 Deed of Cession and not the Spanish courts, which do not have authority nor jurisdiction over Malaysia.

Furthermore, there was no binding agreement between the government and the sultan's heirs that compelled either party to submit to arbitration in the event of a dispute, the court ruled.



Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob