

Hisham Defends Decision To Deport Uighurs
Bernama
August 25, 2011

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 25 (Bernama) -- Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein today defended the government's action in sending 11 Uighurs back to China in the face of condemnation by international rights groups, saying it was justified and done with a good conscience.

He said there was proof that these Uighurs were allegedly involved in criminal activities and an investigation was going on.

"We get condemnation all round in anything we do, but they are people wanted by the Chinese government. We have to be on the side of justice and, at the end of the day, what is most important to me is the safety and stability of our people and our country," he told reporters after the ministry's monthly assembly, here.

The police last week detained 16 Uighurs for their alleged involvement in human trafficking, and deported 11 of them.

A few international rights groups, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), have condemned the action over fear of mistreatment and even torture of the Uighurs in China.

On the death threat he had received, Hishammuddin said that though the intention was to intimidate him it had inspired him instead for he knew that he was on the right track or they would not have made such a threat.

On the registration of foreign nationals in the country, he said 2,237,978 of them had been registered under the 6P amnesty programme up to noon today, with 1,006,127 being legal immigrants and 1,231,851, illegal.

"The numbers are huge, indicating that such an exercise was justified. Such huge numbers have registered voluntarily, meaning there are many more out there who have yet to register," he said.

Hishammuddin said the next step was legalisation which he described as a complex procedure requiring the cooperation of other ministries as well as employers.

He denied that the ministry had ordered all UNHCR card holders to be registered under the 6P programme.

He said the decision to register the refugees was not made by the ministry, but the ministry had issued a statement for them to come in staggered so that there would not be any bottleneck.

A news portal had reported that about 10,000 refugees and asylum-seekers flooded the Immigration Department here when they were given a last-minute notice to register themselves under the 6P programme on Monday.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2011 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/newsgeneral.php?id=610443>