

Malaysia To Implement Prisoner Transfer Programme With Thailand
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 5 (Bernama) -- Malaysia will implement the International Transfer of Prisoners programme with Thailand this March, the first country of origin prisoner exchange programme between the two countries.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the programme was aimed to bring prisoners of this country and foreign prisoners closer to their family and home country.

"We will sign an agreement with Thailand soon," he told reporters after launching the 1Malaysia Meeting with prisoners and their families in conjunction with the Chinese New Year celebrations at the Kajang Prison, near here, Tuesday.

He said the programme will allow Malaysian prisoners to serve their prison sentence in the country, while foreign prisoners can do so in theirs.

The programme was approved by the Parliament in November 2012, and will be gazetted in March 2013, he added.

"A delegation of officers from Malaysia visited Thailand to view the transfer implementation mechanism as well as discuss further to make it a reality," said Hishammuddin.

He said 2,622 Malaysians were serving jail sentences abroad, including 1,218 in Singapore, Thailand (404), China (231), Taiwan (137), Indonesia (146) and 486 in 54 other countries.

Meanwhile, there are 1,758 foreigners in Malaysian prisons of which 930 were Indonesians, Filipino (403), Myanmar (111), Thailand (82), Vietnam (56) and 176 from 26 other countries.

He said among the terms for prisoner transfer was a finalised prison sentence, the offence is an offence in both countries, more than six months of the sentence remains from the date of application, transfer is done to countries in agreement with Malaysia and on parole is also eligible for transfer.

He added that Malaysia also plans to extend the programme to other countries such as South Korea, India, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Philippines, Iran and Venezuela.

Meanwhile, Hishammuddin said seven prisoners were granted 'leave' for seven days as part of efforts to enable prisoners to turn a new leaf with the participation of their families.

Through the initiative, eligible prisoners (based on terms and conditions) are allowed to be with their families to resurrect their future, like attending the Chinese New Year festival, look for jobs, counseling, establish better relationship with the families, etc.

One of the conditions is that a prisoner has only about a year remaining to serve in prison.

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