

MMEA, World's Youngest Maritime Enforcement Agency, Internationally Recognised
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By Norazurra Aziz

PUTRAJAYA, Feb 7 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) may be the youngest maritime enforcement agency in the world.

However, despite such reputation, it is no push-over.

The MMEA's capability to safeguard the peace and security of the nation's waters, is globally recognised.

Last year, it reduced piracy and robbery in the Melaka Straits to zero.

Deputy Director-General (Operations) Rear-Admiral Datuk Ahmad Puzi Ab Kahar said, MMEA had received local and foreign awards for its achievements since it began operations in 2005.

"We are recognised by the local, regional and international maritime communities.

"In addition, we have also received plaudits from the fishermen's associations of Selangor, Pahang, Sabah and Sarawak for checks on intrusions.

"MMEA has also received the Best Maritime Security Agency for 2009 from Frost & Sullivan in Singapore, and the International Quality Summit Award in the Gold Category for Excellence and Business Prestige from Business Initiative Directions in New York on May 28, last year," he said.

Ahmad Puzi said this in a recent interview with Bernama, in conjunction with the agency's eighth anniversary on Feb 15.

He said, MMEA also received another accolade, namely the ISO 9001:2008 recognition, for its Malaysian Maritime Academy.

He noted that MMEA had reduced piracy and robbery in the Melaka Straits to zero last year, as compared to 38 cases in 2004, and detained 580 foreign fishing boats since 2006.

"No less than 70,000 merchant ships pass through the Melaka Straits annually, not including tens of thousands of small ships and fishing boats in the Melaka Straits, South China Sea and Sulu Sea, Celebes, in Sabah.

"About RM40 billion worth of trade pass through the Melaka Straits each year. Thus, it is credit to us when they value our role," he said, adding that 92,000 inspections were carried out by MMEA on suspicious ships since 2006.

"When our waters are peaceful and free from any threat, we, not only see the impact in terms of the fishing industry, but also tourism.

"Similarly, we see oil exploration in the South China Sea as one of the biggest contributors to the national economy. This activity will be disrupted if the situations in the South China

Sea and Sulu Sea are unsafe," he said, adding, as such, the security of 300 oil platforms in the South China Sea must be assured.

He said, other than checking on intrusions, piracy and robbery involving international merchant ships, MMEA was also responsible for eradicating smuggling of contraband and human trafficking, and involved in search and rescue operations.

He said, MMEA's success must be shared with other enforcement agencies, namely, Malaysia Armed Forces, Royal Malaysian Police, Malaysian Customs and Excise Department, Immigration Department and the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission.

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