

Malaysian Government Provides Good Treatment For Victims Of Sabah Intrusion
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LAHAD DATU, March 17 (Bernama) -- Eating fast-food including Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) might be viewed as a common thing to all of us, but not for Faizal Julbakri and his family which for the very first time enjoyed eating KFC's chicken.

The intrusion by Sulu terrorists from southern Philippines in Sabah in a way was a blessing in disguise for this family as they were all smiles in enjoying the famous Colonel Harland David Sanders secret recipe chicken.

Even though, Faizal, 34, migrated to Sabah 15 years ago and worked in Felda's oil palm plantation in Sungai Merah for a daily wage of RM25, which is considered a moderate pay, however, could not afford to buy fast food for himself or his family as he needs to travel far to Lahad Datu, which is 130 kilometres from Sungai Merah to get the popular meal.

"Me and my family could only enjoy this KFC chicken now, which I consider a luxurious meal while seeking temporary shelter in the Cenderawasih multi- purpose hall here. All the facilities provided here are above my expectations.

"Normally, I need to pay RM15 for treatment at a government clinic either for me or my family members but health treatment or medical check-ups conducted at this shelter provided by the Malaysian government are free," he told Bernama when met at the premises.

Hailing from Tawi-Tawi Island, Faizal, who is married to Malaysian citizen, Wazni Abdul Fatah, is grateful for the various aid received and praised the Malaysian government for its kindness in giving aid to all victims regardless of whether they were local residents or foreigners.

Faizal is one of the 1,430 victims displaced by the the Sulu terrorist intrusion into Sabah. Between 50 and 60 per cent of the victims are foreigners and have been relocated to four temporary shelters - Cenderawasih, Embara Budi, Gemala Pura and Fajar Harapan, here.

Malaysian security forces launched an offensive on the Sulu terrorists on March 5, after a series of negotiations proved futile since their intrusion in Lahad Datu on Feb 12.

Throughout the stand off, nine security force members were killed, eight policemen and one soldier while nine others were injured. One other soldier died when his truck overturned while ferrying supplies to the troops.

Faizal, who has been staying at the temporary shelter for 12 days, said the Malaysian government under Prime Minister Najib Razak's administration was very efficient in given out aid to all the victims.

Another victim, Datu Jaafar Yusof, 38, said he was satisfied with the aid given to him such as food, mattresses, pillows, clothing, baby milk and baby diapers, which were important necessities in this period of time.

Felda Sahabat Civil Defence Central Operations Commander, Colonel Abdul Wahab Ibrahim said a total of RM10,000 a day was allocated by the government for food preparation and

other basic needs for the victims.

"The Civil Defence Department which was assigned to monitor the needs of each temporary shelter has never discriminated against any of the victims and all of them are treated fairly.

"I am the officer who is working on the ground and we are now on humanitarian aid mode of operation at these temporary placement centres and even foreigners we treat fairly in line with the Geneva Convention," he said.

He said all the victim had the right to receive humanitarian assistance under the convention and are also allowed to take home the basic necessities given to them like mattresses, pillows, blankets, clothes and other items when the intrusion crisis in Sabah ended.

A check by Bernama at the shelter found all the victims were well equipped with basic needs besides a 41-inch television with a Astro satellite service for their viewing pleasure.

A medical officer from Health Ministry, Rudy Jawi said victims regardless of citizenship received free medical treatment at all the shelters and that the ministry also provided treatment and medical check-ups for 130 of the victims in the name of humanity.

Meanwhile, National Security Council secretary Datuk Mohamed Thajudeen Abdul Wahab slammed the Philippine media for making wild accusations and carrying incorrect news that Philippine citizens were being badly treated at the shelters.

"The aid was not only given to those placed in shelters but also victims seeking temporary shelter in their relatives houses. The National Security Council delivers food and other basic need for victims who stay far from these temporary shelter," he said.

Felda Sahabat manager Juany Salleh said Felda apart from humanitarian aid, also assisted the Malaysian security forces and intrusion victims in the form of logistics and raw materials.

"We allowed all the victim to be placed for free at Felda-owned four multi purpose halls at Embara Budi, Fajar Harapan, Gemala Pura, Cenderawasih," he said.

Gugusan Felda Sahabat has an area of 106,026 hectare, an area big as the state of Negeri Sembilan in Peninsular Malaysia and has a population of nearly 40,000 people, including settlers, farm workers, civil servants and traders.

Felda Sahabat is owned by the Felda Land Development Authority (Felda).

It is the largest palm oil plantation in Sabah and contributes 10 per cent to Sabah's state government revenue.

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