

Foreigners commit 30pc of serious crimes in Sabah, RCI told
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KOTA KINABALU, May 23 — Foreigners are responsible for 30 per cent of index crime in Sabah, the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) on illegal immigrants heard today amid a perceived spike in criminal offences.

Sabah police chief Datuk Hamza Taib testified today that foreigners committed 15 per cent of index crimes against locals — including violent crimes like murder, rape, robberies and theft — and another 15 per cent against other foreigners.

“To me, it’s not that serious,” said Hamza when asked if 15 per cent was a serious figure.

Hamza also insisted that index crime has been dropping for the past three years, but did not provide figures to detail the reduction.

Foreigners have often been blamed for a perceived crime increase in the Borneo state that is struggling with an influx of immigrants.

More than a quarter of Sabah’s population are foreigners, totalling a staggering 889,000 out of the 3.2 million-strong population in the state.

News portal Free Malaysia Today reported last November that the death of a local teenage girl in Kota Marudu in November was rumoured to be linked to foreigners.

Sulu gunmen also invaded Lahad Datu in Sabah last February to stake a claim on the East Coast territory, resulting in the deaths of ten members of the Malaysian security forces.

“Understandably, Malaysians living in Sabah feel threatened and insecure as the number of foreigners keeps increasing. Incidents of drug-related crimes, burglaries and robberies are common,” former Sabah state secretary Tan Sri Simon Sipaun wrote in his June 18 article on Sabahkini last year.

“Gone are the days when we could leave our houses unlocked. Now they are like prisons. Things can only get worse if the demand for jobs is not met by employment opportunities,” he added.

Hamza also disputed today rumours that the Sulu gunmen from southern Philippines who had invaded Lahad Datu possessed Malaysian ICs.

“One hundred per cent they are illegals, but they’re being supported by locals,” said the Sabah police commissioner.

He added that he could not guarantee another foreign invasion would not happen in Sabah again, but stressed that the Eastern Sabah Safety Zone (Esszone) was formed to strengthen the security of the east coast.

Hamza reportedly said last August that the overall crime rate in Sabah had dropped by 10 per cent, with street crimes dipping by 54 per cent.

DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang said last Sunday that newly-appointed Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar and Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi should quit "playing politics" and focus on reducing crime instead.

Putrajaya has sought to address concerns about crime by introducing crime reduction as a National Key Result Area (NKRA), which the police and the government's efficiency unit Pemandu said has been successful in cutting crime.

But the frequency of crime reports in the news and social media has raised doubts over the drop in the official crime figures.

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