

Nurul Izzah entry ban lifted, say Sabah cops
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BY CLARA CHOOI

KUALA LUMPUR, June 3 — Sabah police confirmed today that the state has lifted its ban on Nurul Izzah Anwar entering the east Malaysian state.

State police chief Deputy Comm Datuk Hamza Taib reportedly confirmed this with Astro Awani today but did not offer further information on why the ban was retracted.

The police chief also claimed that no other individuals apart from Nurul Izzah were placed on a travel blacklist, despite information found in leaked correspondence between Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman's office and the state's Immigration Department.

"As far as the police have mentioned, no other individuals were banned apart from Nurul. But even then, that ban has been retracted," DCP Hamza told the station.

"For other leaders, if they intend to come here, there is no problem so long as they abide by the law," he reportedly added.

Astro Awani also reported that Immigration Department director Datuk Alias Ahmad was not able to confirm the authenticity of the leaked document, which the station said contained a list of ten names of those blacklisted from entering the state.

"I advise you to check with the Sabah Chief Minister's Office," he was quoted saying in Bahasa Malaysia via SMS to the station.

According to Astro Awani, the leaked letter named Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Lim Kit Siang, Mohd Rafizi Ramli, Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan, Mohamad Sabu, Syed Ibrahim Syed Noor, Wong Chin Huat, Maria Chin Abdullah, Ong Boon Kiang and Hishammuddin Rais as those barred from entering the state.

Earlier today, The Malaysian Insider reported the contents of a leaked May 21 letter that bore the letterhead of Chief Minister Musa's office.

The letter said that the blacklist was given the Sabah Cabinet's stamp of approval following its first meeting last month on May 15 — 10 days after the 13th general election.

"The Cabinet has agreed that the chief minister invoke his absolute powers under the Immigration Act, and in accordance with certification from the Sabah Royal Malaysian Police Special Branch chief, not to land these individuals to Sabah," the letter said.

According to Sabah DAP chief Jimmy Wong, a reliable source from the Immigration Department had leaked a copy of the first page of the document to him.

The first page of the document was emailed to The Malaysian Insider this morning. From the single page, the duration of the blacklist or its reason, was not stated.

Astro Awani reported that the document was signed by one Moktar Yassin Ajam, who is the state secretary for home affairs and research.

But according to the station, Moktar would not confirm the authenticity of the document when contacted, saying he was only a civil servant and could not issue press statements.

Borneo Insider also reported Sabah State Secretary Tan Sri Sukarti Wakiman as clarifying that the ban on Nurul Izzah had only been for one occasion, which was the eve of the closing ceremony of the Kaamatan Celebrations.

When contacted, Lim described the ban "ridiculous", pointing out that the government was making a mockery of democracy by not only banning its own citizens from entering a state in the country, but legally elected representatives.

"Of course this is not my first time... I am probably the most banned leader... I've been banned from Sabah, from Sarawak... but I thought we have passed those days.

"It looks like we are still in the thick of it," he complained.

Last Thursday, Nurul Izzah was barred from entering Sabah upon arriving in Kota Kinabalu to celebrate Pesta Kaamatan, or the Harvest Festival, in her personal capacity.

Explaining the ban on Saturday, Musa was reported saying that those who pose a threat to the Sabah ideals of peace harmony will not be welcomed to the state.

He added that state never restricted other opposition leaders before the polls, but believed Nurul Izzah had different intention this time.

"Now that the elections are over, their leader refuses to accept the verdict. It is a case of sour grapes and ungentlemanly conduct. He wants to rile up the masses to rally throughout the country to show his, and I repeat, his discontent," he said.

"We have reason to believe that Nurul Izzah's intentions to come to Sabah, this time around, may not be as innocent as she or her fellow opposition members make it out to be," he added.

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