

PM Seeks Clearer SOP Over 'Shoot On Sight' Authority For Security Forces In Sabah Waters
Bernama
July 15, 2014

PUTRAJAYA, July 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has asked the security forces to submit a clearer standard operating procedure (SOP) on their request for the government to give them a 'shoot on sight' authority against intruding gunmen in Sabah waters.

He said the government wanted a clearer SOP and guidelines to rule out varying interpretations.

Chief of Navy, Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Jaafar had sought the 'shoot on sight' authority from the government following an ambush by foreign gunmen on Pulau Mabul last Saturday resulting in the death of a policeman and the abduction of another.

Najib said the government felt that stern action was necessary in incidents of such a nature but the SOP must be clear to prevent anything undesirable from happening.

"The absence of a clear direction and guidance can lead to something undesirable and innocent people can become victims," Prime Minister told a press conference at his official residence, Seri Perdana, in Putrajaya, Tuesday.

In this connection, Najib requested the security forces, such as the police and the military, to submit the SOP to obtain government approval.

"The SOP will be approved by the government for whatever additional steps that need to be there. Otherwise, it will lead to a lot of misunderstanding, confusion and misinterpretation on the ground and something bad could happen," he said.

Najib said he understood that incidents such as that which occurred on Pulau Mabul were serious and there was a need to consider additional and tougher measures.

"I agree that tougher action has to be taken. However, if we were to approve shooting (on sight), we must have an SOP as to when that can be executed.

"It must be very clear because you are talking about ordinary soldiers and policemen on the ground and they must understand in what situation they can shoot, otherwise innocent people can get killed," he said.

Najib said the authorities would hold discussions to improve the existing SOP and guidelines to enable them act more effectively.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi reportedly said that security forces were authorised to shoot intruders in the country's waters deemed a threat to national security when commenting on Abdul Aziz's request for the 'shoot on sight' authority.

The navy chief had made the request following the ambush by foreign gunmen at a resort on Pulau Mabul last Saturday that resulted in the death of marine police corporal Ab Rajah Jamuan, 32, and the abduction of constable Zakia Aleip, 26.

--BERNAMA

Copyright © 2014 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=1053673>