

**Get rid of water villages to curb intrusions, Dr Mahathir tells Sabah
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BY HASBULLAH AWANG CHIK**

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today suggested that the Sabah government resettle people living in water villages to prevent further intrusions.

The former prime minister said Putrajaya's initiative to beef up Sabah's coastline security will not work if intruders continue to use these villages.

Dr Mahathir (pic) said water villages have always been the unofficial entry point into the state and illegals on boats were free to land in the villages without anyone noticing.

"At night, the smuggling of goods and arms can be done and they are then kept in the homes in these villages. As long as there are water villages, Sabah will not be safe from terrorist intrusions and smuggling.

"It is very embarrassing when Malaysia cannot stop terrorists from entering its territory. It is time for the people in water villages to be placed in a safer place on land.

"The cost will be high but I believe Malaysia which can afford to spend billions of ringgit on unimportant project can handle this," Dr Mahathir wrote in his blog.

In the latest Sabah incursion last Saturday, Corporal Abdul Rajah Jamuan, 32, was shot dead in an ambush at the Mabul Water Bungalows Resort, while Constable Zakiah Aleip was kidnapped by gunmen dressed in military fatigues.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi yesterday named former Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) leader Nur Misuari as the man behind the incursion, using various mercenary groups to conduct operations in Sabah's eastern coast.

Dr Mahathir said that during the Lahad Datu intrusion incident last year, the authorities found it difficult to differentiate between the villagers and intruders.

"When terrorists intruded Lahad Datu, the security forces were exposed to attacks by these people who were hiding in houses in the water villages.

"The movements of policemen were easily heard and detected by the terrorists. Police were walking on small wooden bridges and were not orderly. There was nowhere to seek cover when they were attacked," he said.

He said the era of the water villages has passed and the lifestyle of the villagers there is not appropriate for the modern way of life in Malaysia as the nation aims for Vision 2020.

He said the government had to learn some lessons from the Lahad Datu intrusion by using sophisticated weaponry.

"Patrols by security forces in the sea and on land cannot fully stop kidnappings from happening. What will happen if we are attacked by thousands of terrorists?

"Remember, we never thought 200 people could just land and take over an area in Sabah. But it happened. Equipment such as speed boats, spy planes and sophisticated weapons should be supplied to our security forces.

"Today, spy planes are so advanced that no one can hide, whether it is day or night." – July 16, 2014.

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