

Australia Lauds Malaysia's Cooperation On Illegal Fishing

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MELBOURNE, April 2 (Bernama) -- Australia has lauded the action of Malaysian authorities to seize the 'Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated' (IUU) fishing vessel, Viking.

Australia's Agriculture Parliamentary Secretary, Senator Richard Colbeck said his country fully supported the action against the IUU fishing and offered its support as part of the ongoing investigation.

"The vessel has a long history of IUU fishing in the Southern Ocean and is the subject of an Interpol 'Purple Notice' seeking information on individuals and networks which own, operate and profit from the actions of the vessel.

"The captain of the vessel attempted to avoid detection by claiming the vessel was flagged to Nigeria," he said in a statement here today.

Colbeck said Australia was working with Malaysia to disprove this claim and identify other irregularities in documents carried by the vessel.

He said Australia continued to work closely with international partners, including Interpol and through the Regional Plan of Action with South-East Asian countries, to combat IUU fishing.

"Just last month, we congratulated Thai officials for the detention of the IUU vessel, Kunlun, after Australia alerted south-east Asian nations to the potential arrival of the vessel into their ports," he said.

Australia and Malaysia have a strong record of working together and recently, officers from the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service and Australian Fisheries Management Authority were in Malaysia to share information to help combat IUU fishing.

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