

Sabah's Kidnapping Cases Should Be One Of Malaysia's Agenda As Asean Chairman
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 19 (BERNAMA) -- Incidents of kidnapping in Sabah's east coast should be one of Malaysia's agenda as the current ASEAN chairman, said Semporna Member of Parliament Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal.

The rural and regional development minister said action should also be taken by the Philippine authorities to prevent encroachment into Malaysian waters.

"The kidnapping cases have been going on for a long time and it is worrying us because it not only affects the tourism industry, but has more serious effects on local residents," he told reporters after the soft launch of the national-level 'Anugerah Ilham Desa' at Sri Pentas, TV3 here Tuesday.

On a proposal by the police to ban barter trading system currently practised by residents in Sabah's east coast areas and residents of the southern Philippines, Mohd Shafie said any action to be taken had to be studied to ensure effectiveness.

The latest kidnapping occurred on May 14, at the Ocean King Restaurant in Sandakan.

In the 7.45pm incident, Rhien Nyuk Fun, 50, and Bernard Ghen Ted Fen, 39, from Sarawak, were abducted by four armed men who stormed into the restaurant.

The victims are now believed to be in an island in Philippine waters.

In July last year, a marine policeman, Constable Zakia Aliep was kidnapped in Mabul Island, Semporna.

In another development, Mohd Shafie, who is also UMNO vice-president said statements by former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad against Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak needed to be clarified, explained and resolved to protect the party's image.

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