

Rohingya Man Crippled By Beatings At Transit Camp Claim

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By Nur Adila Abdul Wahab

BUTTERWORTH, June 1 (Bernama) -- "Yusuf was beaten until he became lame when he was in the camp in the jungle before he was freed after my husband paid RM2,000 to the agent," said Rokiah Abdul Hamid, 26, a Rohingya who resides in Malaysia.

She said Yusuf Abdul Majid, 17, was left by the roadside in Alor Star by the syndicate which brought in youths to this country after her husband paid the money demanded for Yusuf's release.

Yusuf, who was saved two months ago and now lives with Rokiah's family, cannot speak Malay. Once healthy and well, he is now lame and has difficulty walking.

Rokiah, who was born in Malaysia, said it was on humanitarian grounds and sympathy that her husband paid the money demanded by the agent for Yusuf who had no relatives here after Yusuf's mother asked them for help.

"He (Yusuf) had been taken to Thailand, after that he was brought to Malaysia ... those who have relatives (here), they (the syndicate) would demand RM6,000 or RM7,000.

"Those who had no relatives or anyone to pay for them would die there ... some are sold, women to prostitute dens, men to fishermen near Thailand," she said when met by Bernama at her home in a village where Rohingya Myanmar nationals here are placed.

She said Yusuf was left by the roadside, weak and unable to walk.

"During the 10 months he was in the jungle, he was beaten until he became crippled. They never told us he was crippled ... if nobody wants him, they would not feed him but kept him locked up," she said.

She said all arrangements to save Yusuf were made through the telephone and payment made through a bank.

"After the payment was made, they told us your man will be there, you go and get him," she said.

Another Rohingya youth who was also a victim of human trafficking, Mohamad Salim Huson Ahmad, 16, said he decided to leave his village because life there was hard.

Looking back on his journey to Malaysia a year ago, Mohamad Salim said it had not been easy.

"They (the syndicate) kept me for three months in the jungle in Thailand before taking me

to Padang Besar. They asked for RM6,500 but I had no money.

"They asked me to call my family to get the money, but I said I had no money, even getting food was difficult. After that, they beat me up," he said.

Unable to tolerate the conditions in the transit camp where the Rohingya immigrants were placed, Mohamad Salim decided to run away, and was caught by the Immigration Department in Alor Setar, Kedah.

"At that time, I was not afraid of anything. I am only afraid of Allah (God)," he said, adding that he was now a UNHCR cardholder and had been working at an air-conditioning repair shop for the last three months.

Another Rohingya youth, Rahimullah Mohammad Leddu, 18, also said he preferred being arrested by the police or immigration authorities rather than return to Myanmar.

"I do not want to go back. If I go back, I will surely die. If the police or immigration authorities catch me, they will surely help," said Rahimullah, who is also a UNHCR cardholder.

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