

Putrajaya lacks resolve to tackle human-trafficking crisis, says PKR
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Putrajaya is putting the country to shame with its lack of resolve in tackling the root causes of the recent human trafficking crisis in the region, PKR said today.

PKR international bureau chief Gooi Hsiao Leong said in a statement the discovery of human-trafficking camps and mass graves in the northern state of Perlis, near the Thai border, meant that the government, which had been denying the problem for years, has now been "caught with its pants down".

"It has exposed to the world, our government's gross neglect and total failure in fighting human trafficking and securing our borders for so many years," Gooi said.

Gooi said the United States' State Department had highlighted as far back as 2009 about the involvement of Malaysian immigration authorities in the trafficking of Rohingya refugees to the Malaysia-Thailand border.

"Unlike the seriousness shown by our Thai counterparts in recent weeks in cracking down on human trafficking, where more than 50 police officers have been transferred from the border area, and with many other police officers and even an ex-mayor being arrested, our government's response pales far in comparison."

Gooi also said the government's idea to erect a border fence was nothing but a "publicity stunt" to gloss over its failure to detect the camps sooner, as they had been operating for years.

"Sadly, the prime minister's call two days ago to take stern action against the masterminds, and not the henchmen, of human trafficking syndicates, blaming instead on foreigners, shows his unwillingness to acknowledge and deal with the root causes of our own security and local law enforcement shortcomings."

Malaysia is already in Tier-3 of the State Department's Trafficking in Persons Annual Report (TIP), making it among the worst offenders in human trafficking.

The mass graves were discovered shortly after thousands of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar landed in Malaysia. They had been stranded at the sea for months, after being abandoned by human traffickers.

The human traffickers had to take a different sea route due to the Thai government's crackdown on human trafficking, leading to a humanitarian crisis that had to be dealt by the Thai, Malaysian and Indonesian authorities. – June 1, 2015.

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