

Rohingya crisis won't affect Malaysia's 2015 human trafficking report, says US

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By Ram Anand

Malaysia's handling of the Rohingya refugee crisis will not influence its ranking in the 2015 Trafficking in Person (TIP) report by the US State Department, US Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Migration and Refugees Anne C. Richard said today.

"The US is currently reviewing Malaysia's efforts in its 2015 report," she said during a press conference in Putrajaya today.

"However, the 2015 report covers until March 2015, which mean Malaysia's handling of this crisis will only be reflected in the 2016 report," she said, refusing to comment further.

Thousands of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar were recently stranded at sea after being abandoned by human traffickers, with Malaysia sending some boats back to sea after refusing to take in the refugees.

Malaysia also recently discovered mass graves and human trafficking camps in Perlis, near the Malaysia-Thailand border.

The country ranked a lowly Tier 3 in the 2014 TIP report, making it one of the countries with the worst human trafficking records.

She also said that Malaysia should work closely with the United Nations refugee arm UNHCR to solve the current crisis and handle the refugees who have come to Malaysia.

"UNHCR has the expertise and that kind of expertise is needed here," she said.

Richard revealed that she had visited the detention centre where refugees were being held in Kedah and said she was satisfied with the conditions they are being kept in.

She urged Malaysia and all countries that have yet to ratify the UN convention on refugees to do so, and added that she "appreciated" Malaysia's move to grant them temporary shelter despite not being a signatory.

Malaysia and Indonesia, after a ministerial meeting with Thailand, decided to give temporary shelter to boat migrants stranded at sea after initially pushing them back from landing on shore. – June 1, 2015

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