

Journalists showed grim conditions of trafficking camps along Malaysia-Thai border
The Malaysian Insider
May 26, 2015
By Looi Sue-Chern

Police escorted media personnel on a gruelling one hour journey into the jungle in Wang Kelian, Perlis today, where 28 human trafficking camps and 139 mass graves were found recently.

This morning, 60 local and international pressmen trekked up the Bukit Wang Burma, where Malaysian authorities showed them one of the camps.

Here, 37 suspected graves had been found.

Due to the close proximity to the Thai border, journalists and photographers were briefed on precautionary measures and told to keep within their assigned groups and mind the armed General Operations Force (PGA) personnel escorting them.

They were led into the jungle, more than an hour after a team of police forensics personnel left to investigate the sites.

A PGA officer escorting the media said it was believed that the illegal immigrants were made to go through similarly challenging route from the Thai side of the hill to enter Malaysian soil.

He also believed that the migrants could have been forced to hike barefooted.

About one hour of hiking, the media arrived at a small clearing surrounded by trees.

Items such as old clothes, food wrappers, old shoes, old wallets and a motorcycle battery were found among the broken tree branches and rocks.

It is believed that the items were left behind by those involved in human trafficking activities.

Another 300m to 500m away, the media spotted fallen trees, barbed wire and tarpaulin sheets, which were believed to have been left behind by human traffickers.

Further up, barbed wire was found nailed to a tree. More wire was left on the ground surrounding a small perimeter believed to be a small campsite.

Police said it was possible that the barbed wire was meant to keep the migrants within the perimeter.

There were also signs of sentry posts nearby and some bags that were half buried by leaves.

At 1.25pm, the media arrived at a large camp where the 37 suspected graves were found.

The camp, located at a valley not far from the Thai border, appeared dilapidated.

Authorities believed it could have accommodated some 300 people.

There were torn up blue tarpaulin sheets hanging among the fallen wooden structure.

Nearby, there is also a wooden cage which was covered with barbed wires.

It could not be ascertained what the cage could have been used for but it was large enough to fit one or two persons.

Various items were also found scattered on the ground. This including shampoo bottles and medicines.

There is a spartan area with a hole on the ground most likely being used to cook, another hole to place plastic plates and cups, and a deeper hole to throw away the leftovers and wastes.

A few hundreds metres away, there was an unmarked grave where skeletal remains were found wrapped in a shroud. So far, that was the only grave excavated today.

State police CID chief ASP Mohd Bahar Alias, who confirmed the discovery, said there was only time to investigate one grave today.

He said the remains would be taken to the Sultanah Bahiyah Hospital in Alor Star for post-mortem.

Yesterday, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar confirmed that Malaysian authorities have discovered 28 camps from Tangga Seratus to Wang Kelian near the Thai border.

It is believed that the camps had been used to hold illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and Rohingya refugees from Myanmar who were trying to seek asylum and enter the country. – May 26, 2015.

Copyright © 2015 Edge Insider Sdn Bhd

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/journalists-visit-mass-graves-along-malaysia-thai-border>