

**Security Threat to Sabah Now Spreads to Its West Coast – Ahmad Zahid
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KOTA KINABALU, March 5 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said that the security threat to Sabah has now spread to the west coast area and no longer confined to the eastern coast of the state.

"Previously, the threat was only in the east coast of Sabah, but security patrols in the east coast have now been tightened. The security challenge in Sabah now is not only confined to the east coast but has widened to the west coast too.

"Intelligence information reveals that there are commanders from a sultanate appointed in every State Legislative Assembly constituency in Sabah. This is a serious security matter. This is a matter of real threat to the country," he said.

Ahmad Zahid said this in his speech at the opening of the Security and Public Order Seminar (SEKAM) 2016 at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) here today. Also present were Sabah Chief Minister who is also the Joint Chairman of the Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCom) Datuk Seri Musa Aman and Deputy Inspector-General of Police Datuk Seri Noor Rashid Ibrahim.

At the event, Ahmad Zahid who is also the Home Minister witnessed the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Institute of Public Security of Malaysia (IPSOM) under the Home Ministry and the Sabah Strategic and Security Research Centre (SASSREC), UMS.

Based on the current threat, Ahmad Zahid said security operations on land, at sea and in the air were no longer confined to the coastal areas of east Sabah but also extended to the coastal areas in the western part of the state.

Thus, Ahmad Zahid wanted a comprehensive defence or 'handruh' involving cooperation between all strata of society and members of the security forces to be given a new life and continuity to ensure that not an inch of the country's territory, especially in Sabah, was encroached by anyone.

"Although the presence of the police and military is important, punitive and preventive laws are important, it is the resilience of the people that is more important than the existing law and the presence of the security forces because actual defence is the overall defence or 'handruh'.

"An understanding (on the overall defence) can assist the physical defence, in fact we can assist the existing security forces," he said.

Ahmad Zahid pointed out that the responsibility of defending the country's security and sovereignty was the responsibility of every strata of society regardless of their origin.

The Deputy Prime Minister also reassured that the Federal Government would defend the sovereignty of Sabah and would not allow anyone to encroach even an inch into the country's soil.

He said Sabah was a sovereign state in Malaysia and there was no question of anyone making any claim on the state because the people of Sabah, through a poll carried out in the 1960's, had made a decision to be together in the formation of Malaysia.

Thus, Ahmad Zahid said the existence of various acts and legislations which were punitive and preventive in the country aimed to ensure that the national sovereignty enjoyed currently continued to be preserved.

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