

Ahmad Zahid, Musa Aman Jointly Chair First ESSZone Advisory Board Meeting

KOTA KINABALU, April 17 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman chaired the first Eastern Sabah Security Zone (ESSZone) Advisory Board Meeting, here, today.

The meeting was held at Sri Gaya, the chief minister's official residence, and it was attended by the board members including National Security director-general Tan Sri Zulkifeli Mohd Zin, Malaysian Armed Forces chief Tan Sri Raja Mohamed Affandi Raja Mohamed Noor, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar and Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) director-general Datuk Seri Ahmad Puzi Ab Kahar.

The other board members present were the Malaysian Immigration director-general, Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry secretary-general, Royal Customs Department director-general and the Sabah State Secretary.

According to a statement here, four working papers were presented and discussed, with Sabah police commissioner Datuk Ramli Din, commander of the Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCom) Datuk Wan Abdul Bari Wan Abdul Khalid, ESSCom chief executive officer Noor Alam Khan Abdul Wahid Khan and Institute of Public Security of Malaysia (IPSOM) chief executive Datuk Lee Bee Pang briefing on the security level and the public actions taken in the ESSZone.

It said overall, the situation in the ESSZone was safe and under control.

The ESSZone advisory board with its secretariat at the National Security Council (NSC) under the Prime Minister's Department, was established during the NSC meeting chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak on Jan 10 aimed at strengthening the existing mechanism.

Among the terms of reference of the board is advising the ESSZone Committee chaired by the Sabah Chief Minister on measures to boost security and public order in the ESSZone.

The board also has a role of advising the committee on how to increase cooperation between the relevant ministries, departments and agencies at the federal and state levels in conducting operations and taking other actions in the ESSZone.

The board can also put forward suggestions and proposals to the Steering Committee which is chaired by the prime minister on additional measures in boosting security and public order in the ESSZone.

"The establishment of the advisory board could strengthen security management in the ESSZone which involves various departments and agencies at the federal and state levels.

"This is to ensure that security threats such as kidnapping for ransom, smuggling, entry of illegal immigrants and a second infiltration by the Sulu Sultanate militants can be prevented or appropriately tackled," the statement said.

The people in Sabah, particularly in its eastern region, were also urged to be responsible as citizens and to be always observant and wary of the threats, and to give their full cooperation to ESSCom by channelling information on such threats.

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