

# Claims of govt abandoning Sabahans during pandemic baseless - Saifuddin

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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 30 -- The government has implemented various efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic in Sabah and throughout the country.

Minister of Communications and Multimedia, Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah said the government was concerned and took the situation in Sabah very seriously, and as such, allegations by certain quarters that the people of Sabah were left on their own to face the pandemic were untrue.

"It gives an unfounded impression without taking into account the real situation. The government welcomes views and criticisms, but such criticisms must be based on facts and truth.

"I call on the people regardless of background and political affiliation to continue to work together to break the COVID-19 chain of infection and help heal the nation for the people's well-being," he said in a statement today.

He said Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin today inspected preparations by the Royal Malaysian Air Force's (RMAF) to send critical items to Sabah and Sarawak.

"Missions like this are part of ongoing measures and efforts taken by the government to contain the pandemic and keep the people of Sabah safe.

"In fact, every day, the National Security Council's (MKN) COVID-19 Management special meeting is chaired by the Prime Minister to monitor latest developments and to strengthen measures taken,"

The Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO) throughout Sabah scheduled to end on Oct 26 was also extended until Nov 9, as with the Enhanced Movement Control Order (EMCO) implemented in several red zone areas in Sabah, he said.

Saifuddin added that the government has also sent additional teams from various categories and service schemes involving personnel from the Health Ministry (MoH), the police, Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) and other security agencies to assist the situation in Sabah and to ensure compliance.

“They not only carry out CMCO and EMCO enforcement duties but also ensure residents in red zones receive sufficient supply of essential goods,” he said.

He said public sanitisation teams, under the supervision of the Housing and Local Government Ministry have so far conducted 1,740 sanitisation operations involving 987 premises in Sabah.

Saifuddin said the MOH had also increased the capacity and mobilisation of assets and human resources in ensuring that the public health and medical system in Sabah remained sustainable to curb the spread of COVID-19.

“Currently, Sabah has nine hospitals that treat COVID-19, and 28 COVID-19 Low-Risk Quarantine and Treatment Centres (PKRC).

“Total bed capacity for the treatment of COVID-19 patients is 8,375 with a utilisation rate of 47 percent while the overall capacity of beds in the intensive care unit (ICU) is 153 of which 63 per cent are occupied.

"The government has also agreed to appoint 1,899 additional health workers on a contract basis to address this (pandemic) third wave," he said.

Saifuddin said the MOH had also worked with the MAF in the setting up the field hospital in Tawau for the use of non-COVID-19 patients so that more beds at the Tawau Hospital could be used to treat COVID-19 patients.

He also said the Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) laboratory testing capacity in Sabah has doubled since last July.

"Every day, RT-PCR samples are sent to the Institute of Medical Research (IMR) and the National Public Health Laboratory using RMAF and Pos Laju services

while 100,000 RTK Antigen test kits are sent out every month, especially to Sabah for faster results,” he said.

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