

Battle may not be over yet

NST 7/3/13 MS 2

Pray for safety of security forces, says PM

SABAH INTRUSION: Terrorists have broken through security cordon in Kampung Tanduo

LAHAD DATU

THE authorities yesterday revealed pictures of 13 terrorists killed by security forces in Kampung Tanduo here, showing that the crisis was for real but that the government was in control of the situation.

The images of the Sulu terrorists, 12 of them found buried in shallow graves and one shot while clad in army fatigue, as well as the arrests of four men suspected of being sympathisers, showed that security forces are on track to end the crisis.

But the battle is perhaps far from over after it was revealed that the terrorists have broken through the security cordon in Kampung Tanduo and are now trying to blend in among the villagers.

Yesterday, fresh fighting erupted at the village here as frightened villagers made their way to the nearest evacuation centres.

The terrorists had demonstrated their willingness to shoot at will, having drawn first blood when they killed two policemen in a skirmish at Kampung Tanduo here on Friday and another six in an ambush in Simunul, Semporna, on Saturday.

The security forces are leaving nothing to chance as widespread operations to weed out terrorists and sympathisers are being carried out at almost all towns on the east coast of Sabah.

More reinforcements are being sent to Sabah from here.

The Federal Special Task Force (Operations/Counter-Terrorism) director Datuk Seri Mohamad Fuzi Harun arrived in Tawau early this week to strengthen operations



Members of the security forces distributing essentials to people from Tanjung Labian and Tanjung Batu who are putting up at the Felda Sahabat Fajar Harapan evacuation centre. Pic by Osman Adnan

there. An assistant superintendent and five other officers from the Terengganu state police left for Semporna yesterday with more deployments on the way.

As the situation still remained critical, a widow of a policeman killed by the terrorist made a heartfelt plea.

"Enough with the bloodshed. Please, I hope all of this can be ended now," said Siti Banddorah

Mahali, whose husband, Sergeant Abd Azis Sarikon, was one of the six policemen killed in Semporna.

She did not want other families to endure a similar fate.

One of the injured, police Inspector Mohd Hasnal Jamil from the Special Branch, was also transferred to the Selayang Hospital yesterday from Tawau.

Hasnal was in the party which was ambushed in Simunul on Sat-

urday.

The Philippines government had also condemned the intrusion with its president Benigno Aquino III urging his people not to support the terrorists.

"What's happening in Sabah is wrong.

"So, why do we have to support it?" he asked, adding the terrorists' action had dragged the entire Philippines into the problem.

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday again conveyed his deepest condolences to the families of police personnel killed while defending the country in Sabah.

Najib also called upon all Malaysians to pray for the safety of members of the security forces battling the nation's enemies in Lahad Datu and Semporna.

"At this very moment as I speak, the lives of our warriors are at stake.

"Let us all pray for their safety and hope that the enemies will be defeated, and altogether eliminated once and for all," he told some 3,000 Tenaga Nasional Berhad's employees at the utility company's headquarters in Jalan Pantai, here yesterday.

The prime minister's speech was also followed by more than 20,000 TNB employees nationwide through video conferencing.

Two days ago, the security forces launched an air strike using F-18 and Hawk fighter jets in the first operation to end the incursion by foreign terrorists since Feb 12.

During his working visit yesterday, Najib also witnessed the exchange of the memorandum of understanding between TNB and Perumahan Rakyat 1Malaysia Berhad for the construction of affordable homes for TNB staff on an area measuring 3.2ha in Kajang.



Raul Hernandez says **Malaysian and Philippine ships** are **closely monitoring** the waters between Sabah and Sulu

Aquino: Sabah claim should be resolved peacefully

GENERAL SANTOS CITY (Philippines): What's happening in Sabah is wrong, so why do we have to support it?

This was how President Benigno Aquino III defended his administration's handling of the Sabah crisis during a political rally here of Team PNoy senatorial bets yesterday, reported Inquirer.net.

"This incident is wrong.

"If this is wrong, then why do we have to support it?" Aquino asked.

Aquino insisted that the Sabah claim should be resolved peacefully, saying the problem started when the self-proclaimed Sultanate of Sulu

leased Sabah to the British North Borneo Company in 1878.

"What is the cause of the problem? Isn't it that their ancestors began it when they leased Sabah to the British?"

"If they have a problem with the agreement, and if we are interested, then we need to talk about it in a peaceful manner," he said.

"If the agreement signed then was wrong, then we need to correct it," he said.

Aquino lamented that the entire Philippines was now being dragged into the problem.

"It's not yet clear that they are

sharing their right to Sabah with the Philippines.

"But in their fight, the entire nation is being dragged into the issue," he said.

The people, he said, were his witnesses how he had repeatedly appealed to the group who had landed in Sabah to return home and discuss the problem peacefully.

"Is it correct that we support those who are carrying arms, and there is killing?" he said.

Meanwhile, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) spokesman Raul Hernandez said Malaysian and Philippine ships were closely mon-

itoring the waters between Sabah and Sulu amid reports that thousands of Tausugs were sailing to the village of Lahad Datu to reinforce the Sulu "royal army."

"From the navy side, we have been told that there are a number of ships there and they are monitoring the area jointly with the Malaysian navy," he told reporters at a briefing yesterday.

He said this was "to make sure that some of the supporters of the group in Lahad Datu would not go and make the situation more tense (and) so that the situation would not escalate further."