

Headline	Abduction case rises security and illegal immigrants issues		
MediaTitle	New Sabah Times English (KK)		
Date	11 Apr 2014	Color	Black/white
Section	Home	Circulation	22,425
Page No	12	Readership	134,550
Language	English	ArticleSize	658 cm ²
Journalist	NOR AIN HASSAN	AdValue	RM 1,276
Frequency	Daily (EM)	PR Value	RM 3,828



Abduction case rises security and illegal immigrants issues

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KOTA KINABALU: The recent abduction of a Chinese tourist and Filipina worker at the Singamata Adventures Reef Resort off Semporna has again brought into light the need for increased security but also issues on the presence of illegal immigrants in Sabah and the misconception that Sabah is not a safe place to visit.

New Sabah Times interviewed several people and they all

raised their concern over the kidnapping while asking the government to beef up surveillance particularly in the coastal areas.

Siti Faznur Abd Khaleq, 26, from Kota Kinabalu said the government should improve security along the east coast to avoid such an incident from happening again.

"Right now, we can see that the government is doing their very best to overcome the situation. Let's hope for the best," she said.

Yusuf Khan, 25, agreed and said security should be tightened in resort areas especially in view of the Visit Malaysia Year (VMY2014).

"Sabah's east coast waters are vast but I believe that the police are fully committed in carrying out their duties to ensure the safety of the state," said Yusuf who is a reporter with a local newspaper.

Ogilvy Richard, 26, urges the government to put full effort in rescuing the abducted victims.

"I hope the security forces will be placed in popular tourist attractions to ensure the safety of the tourists and locals," she said.

Meanwhile, a technician at the medical laboratory in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Sharifah Guriaman, 26, said the government needs to tighten control on the waters and work together with resort owners.

She said resort owners also needed to monitor their staff and do a background check

before hiring.

"In terms of tourism promotions, I suggest that we should include safety elements and precautions to convince visitors that we do care for their safety and also to tell them we are a safe country.

"There are also other countries which are not safe to be visited but are still receiving tourists, so this incident should not weaken our spirit to promote our country," said Sharifah.

Meanwhile, Malvin Marcus, 27, an officer at Tourism Malaysia here said that the government should thank the travel agents in China who are still promoting Malaysia, in particular Sabah, as one of the best travel destinations in the region.

He said that Chinese tourists are still coming to Sabah because of the beaches and islands.

"The Consul General based in Kuching gave out a travel advisory to their people that Sabah is still safe to be visited, just that the tourists need to make sure they know the place they are

going and to avoid any high-risk areas," he said.

A Sabahan Insurance Agent at Prudential-Petaling Jaya, Masitah Bakir, 36, said she keeps getting asked by friends about the safety level in Sabah.

"It is not fair that people have a misconception that Sabah is a dangerous tourist destination. The case happened in Semporna, not in Kota Kinabalu. And it takes about nine hours by road to get from KK to Semporna," she said.

She added that this is not the time to blame the government but to find the best

solution and to beef up security especially in the east coast.

Norizan Abdul Satar, 45, Pertiwi Cerah Sdn Bhd Director said the government especially the Defence Ministry needed to strengthen security to prevent another abduction.

"This incident should not happen again as it could affect tourist arrivals here especially from China. The outside invasion is not the only problem. Maybe we should also check for internal problems or inside jobs," she said.

Mohd Farlan Jasmen, 27, from Semporna, said that it could be illegal immigrants behind the kidnapping.

"These problems might be because of an inside job and the government should put more effort to get rid of illegal immigrants and those who hold false identity cards.

"There might be illegal immigrants who are working in hotels and resorts in Semporna. Employers should not hire them," he said.

Nur Farzanie Jaafar, 27, a lecturer in the Faculty of Accountancy at the Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) said ESSCOM must strengthen security in Semporna because of its close proximity to the Philippines.

"ESSCOM plays a vital role to ensure security in the East Coast of Sabah. Illegal immigrants should not get into our state so easily," she said adding that patrolling should be done more frequent.

Ai Ling Choo, 26, a hotel operator from Kota Belud said employers should only hire locals to work in the

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hotels or resorts and to monitor their activities.

"It is so sad to hear about the case in Semporna. Semporna is a very well-known tourist destination because of the beautiful islands like Sipadan, Pom Pom and Matakang.

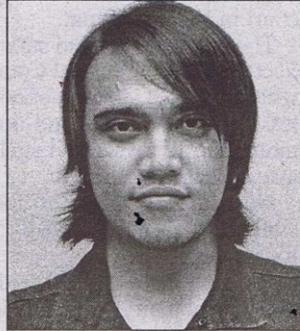
"ESSCOM needs to improve the level of security in Semporna particularly at the tourism spots," she said.

Suriah Bahari, 27, from Semporna said the abduction showed ESSCOM still needed to improve.

"We need to do everything we can to strengthen security especially in Semporna or that place will not be safe anymore for tourists and locals," she pointed out.



Siti Faznur



Yusuf



Ogilvy



Sharifah



Malvin



Masitah



Norizan



Mohd Farlan



Nur Farzanie

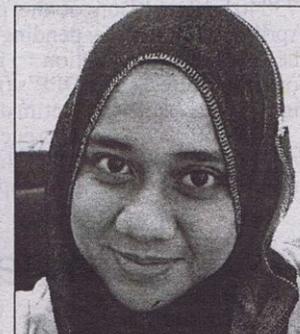
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Ai Ling



Suriah