

Five immigration officers nabbed for human trafficking

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Five immigration officers nabbed for human trafficking 2009/07/20 KUALA LUMPUR: Nine people, including five Johor Immigration Department officers, were arrested in several locations in the state since Friday, for alleged involvement in an international human trafficking syndicate.

The suspects were believed to have received payments from a syndicate for the "sale" of a group of people, comprising mostly Rohingya refugees, as forced labour in various sectors like the fisheries industry.

Bukit Aman CID director Datuk Seri Mohd Bakri Zinin said the police had been monitoring the activities of the suspects, aged between 25 and 40, since March this year.

"According to a victim, the suspects were directly involved in human trafficking, starting from the Malaysia-Thai border to the rat trail believed to be their exit point to international countries.

"Upon reaching the exit point, the victims were handed over to a syndicate before being taken to a neighbouring country or sent back to Malaysia to work as forced labour," he told a press conference here today.

The suspects have been remanded until Friday, and would be investigated under Section 13 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2007 which carries an imprisonment for a term which may extend to 20 years and fine, if convicted.

Bakri said the suspects were believed to have worked closely with the syndicate which had been active since last year, adding that the police were in the midst of tracking down syndicate members and their accomplices.

Last month, the United States put Malaysia back on its list of countries suspected of not doing enough to combat human trafficking, together with six African countries, namely Chad, Eritrea, Niger, Mauritania, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

In another development, Bakri said 772 foreign nationals and illegal immigrants were nabbed over the past four years, in connection with several rape cases. For the first six months of this year, he said 134 foreigners and illegal immigrants were arrested for murder. - Bernama