

### **Hajiji: Sabah rejects move made by Sulu heirs**

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah will table a motion to reject any territorial claims by the Philippines and self-claimed heirs of the defunct Sulu Sultanate at the next state assembly meeting, if necessary.

"I would like to reiterate that the state government has never recognised and will not recognise any claims of the Sulu Sultanate on Sabah," said Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor.

"The people of Sabah had already made their decision to be part of the new federation of Malaysia (1963) that was endorsed by the United Nations," he said this yesterday when winding up debates on the government policy speech by Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Johar Mahiruddin.

He was responding to calls by some assemblymen for a special motion to reject such claims on Sabah, following a Paris court decision to award RM62bil to the self-claimed heirs of the Sulu Sultanate.

Hajiji told the House that the issue was under the purview of the Federal Government and was being handled by Wisma Putra and the Attorney General's Chambers.

State Opposition leader Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal asked the state government to push the Federal Government to resolve the "never-ending" issue once and for all.

Shafie cited Indonesia's claim on Sabah's Pulau Sipadan and Pulau Ligitan, which ended when the International Court of Justice declared the islands as part of Malaysia.

On foreigners in Sabah, Hajiji said they comprised 23.7% of Sabah's 3,418,785 population.

"There are 810,443 foreigners in Sabah, based on the early Population and Housing Census 2020 report by the **Statistics Department**," he said, disputing Datuk Christina Liew's (PKR-Api Api) claim that there were over a million Filipinos in the state.

Hajiji said the state government had been taking steps to resolve the problem of illegal immigrants. He said a special committee headed by Sabah Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Seri Dr Jeffrey Kitingan was set up on Feb 16 to look for a permanent solution.

"The committee has been given three months to come up with recommendations for the state Cabinet," said Hajiji.

He also shot down a proposal by Datuk Seri Yong Teck Lee (SAPP-nominated) for Sabah to issue its own identity cards to protect the rights of "original" Sabahans.

The issuance of identity cards was under the purview of the Federal Government, Hajiji said.

On tightening security on the east coast of Sabah, he said the Federal Government had suggested setting up a General Operations Force (GOF) brigade in Lahad Datu and a GOF battalion in Kunak district.

“There is also a proposal to set up new GOF outposts at the Kuala Sungai Manalunan river mouth in Kinabatangan and Maruap river mouth as well as a Forward Operational Base in Pulau Banggi in Kudat and Pulau Mabul in Semporna,” he added.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2022/03/25/hajiji-sabah-rejects-move-made-by-sulu-heirs>