

# CP: INTELLIGENCE-GATHERING ON TRANSBORDER CRIME ON TRACK

**LABUAN:** The Malaysian security agencies are stepping up intelligence-gathering efforts and transborder collaboration with their Philippine counterparts to effectively tackle transborder crime, especially in the Eastern Sabah Security Zone (ESSZONE).

Outgoing Sabah Police Commissioner, Datuk Abdul Rashid Harun said the collaboration on information exchange on transborder crime was on track.

"Despite the Philippine government's permission to allow the entry of Malaysian security forces into the country's waters to resolve the kidnapping issue, we feel that exchange of information between the two countries' security agencies must be enhanced.

"Our security agencies are not familiar with the kidnapers' hideouts, and for us to enter their area is rather not a wise move.

"Therefore, as far as we are concerned, enhancing information exchange and transborder collaboration is much more important," he told a press conference during his working visit to the Labuan police headquarters, yesterday.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte,

in his inaugural visit to Malaysia recently, granted permission for Malaysian security forces to enter his country's waters in pursuit of not only kidnapers, but also militants who have been terrorising Sabah's east coast.

Calling this a new development in Putrajaya-Manila ties, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abd Razak had reportedly said that the two leaders agreed on the need to stamp out the security risk which also affected Indonesia.

Meanwhile, Abdul Rashid, said the Sabah police contingent had done their level best to safeguard the state's security and the country's sovereignty.

"We have enhanced our training programmes and intensified the fighting preparations against terrorism, which have not been done before," he said.

Abdul Rashid said Sabah's security aspect was relatively different (in terms of threats) with the vast 1,733.7km stretch of the state's shoreline from Kudat to Tawau and being surrounded by 361 islands with some of them located close to southern Philippines, prompting for more consistent surveillance.

"As such, we are unable to rule out the possibility of transborder crime like kidnapping, but we continue to step up the surveillance of the state's waters to curb such incidents," he said. - Bernama



Abdul Rashid in a group photo with members of the Labuan police contingent