

## MALAYSIAN TRADES UNION CONGRESS

### STOP DISCRIMINATORY TARGETTING OF FOREIGNERS

MTUC is shocked by the discrimination against foreigners that recently took place when Keretapi Tanah Melayu Bhd screened its own passengers for illegals, as was recently reported in the main stream media (*New Straits Times*, 4/3/2007 :- *KTM going after illegals*). It was reported that in a two-hour operation conducted by 20 KTM auxiliary police and 14 Rela members, 5 women and 38 men from Indonesia, Nepal, India, Africa, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan were nabbed.

KTM's central district senior manager Ali Hanafiah Bujal was quoted as saying that there have been incidences of pick pocketing on the trains and on the platforms. He also said that signaling and track equipment have been stolen. He said that the perpetrators of the crimes were "possibly" drug addicts or foreigners.

The reason advanced by Ali Hanafiah Bujal for the specific targeting of foreigners was not only unacceptable but also an affront to common sense and the whole action seems to have been based solely on prejudices against migrants rather than fact. Further, the KTM operation was not to look for the suspected perpetrators of the said crimes but apparently to weed out allegedly undocumented foreigners.

The prejudice against foreigners with regard their involvement in criminal activities also is not at all supported by facts and statistics. Interestingly in a Star Online report (16/2/2007) entitled "IGP to employers: Monitor your foreign workers", the Inspector General of police, Tan Sri Musa Hassan was reported to have said that **only 2% of the crimes committed in the country are by foreign workers.**

The Deputy Minister of Internal Security Datuk Fu Ah Kiow said that 34 per cent of the 35,000 prisoners in the country are foreigners. There are 11,900 convicted and remanded foreign nationals awaiting court verdict (*Bernama*, 25/2/2007). It must be pointed out that remand prisoners are those that have not been tried and convicted yet. It must also be pointed out that many foreign nationals, especially migrant workers do end up as remand prisoners as the majority cannot afford bail or fulfill the requirements of getting a Malaysian surety.

Out of a total of 2.6 million foreigners in Malaysia's 10.5 million strong labour force, 11,900 is less than 0.5% only. There is thus no justification whatsoever to associate crime with foreigners.

MTUC also state that specific and conscious targeting of foreigners, including migrant workers, is also contrary to wording and the spirit of Article 8(1) of the Malaysians Federal Constitution that clearly states that "All persons are equal before the law and entitled to the equal protection

of the law.", and by the usage of the word "persons" as opposed to "citizens", it is crystal clear that this guarantee applies to all persons, including foreigners and migrant workers.

MTUC calls for immediate end of all discriminatory practices against specific groups of persons by reason that they are "foreigners" by KTM and other persons.

MTUC also calls again for an end of the usage of the Volunteer People's Corp (RELA) for law enforcement. Law enforcement should always be done by professionally trained police and other law enforcement officers – not lay untrained volunteers.

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