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MAF To Strengthen Security In Sabah Waters With New Assets - Hishammuddin

KUALA LUMPUR, April 19 (Bernama) -- Security in Sabah waters will be given a booster shot in the arm when underwater detection and coastal surveillance systems, complemented by six US-made attack helicopters are set in motion.

The Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) will install an underwater detection system at the Royal Malaysian Navy base in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, while the coastal surveillance system is for use in the Eastern Sabah Security Zone (ESSZone).

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said the six MD-530G helicopters made by McDonnell Douglas would be received by year-end.

He said the helicopters were acquired specifically to reinforce defence at the Eastern Sabah Security Command (ESSCom).

"All of these assets will be placed in Sabah, and we will also deploy Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFV25), namely 'Gempita'," he added.

Hishammuddin was speaking to reporters after witnessing the signing of contracts and memorandi of understanding during the 2016 Defence Services Asia (DSA 2016) Exhibition and Conference at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) here Tuesday.

At the event, a total of 10 contract documents and four letters of acceptance worth RM2.9 billion were signed between Malaysia and a number of defence firms.

In a related development, the Defence Minister said four Blackhawk helicopters from Brunei were also expected to arrive later this year to strengthen security in the region.

"Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah has bestowed us the Blackhawks and we will upgrade them and buy the spare parts ourselves.

"This acquisition is not only to strengthen Sabah's security but also Brunei's," he said.

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Commenting on the proposed joint patrols to tackle piracy and kidnapping in the Sulu Sea, Hishammuddin said the threat could not be addressed by one country alone.

"What is being done in the Straits of Melaka (with Thailand and Singapore) can also be implemented in the Sulu waters," he said.

Yesterday, Hishammuddin reportedly proposed to invite Singapore and Thailand to become observers of Sulu Sea security patrols.

The four-day DSA 2016 exhibition which began yesterday saw the participation of companies from 60 countries.

Meanwhile in KOTA KINABALU, Sabah Police Commissioner Datuk Abd Rashid Harun said the stationing of the six US attack helicopters in ESSZone would certainly beef up security in the region.

"It is a good approach...and will increase existing assets to ensure the security of east Sabah is preserved," he told reporters today, after flagging-off the YADIM-PDRM-DBKK-JPAM Concern Convoy to help fire victims in Kampung Titingan, Tawau.

Also present at the flagging-off ceremony were Sabah Islamic Missionary Foundation Malaysia (YADIM) director Samin Ongki.

On the humanitarian aid convoy for the fire victims in Tawau, Abd Rashid said cash, clothing and essential items would be delivered, adding this was proof of the Sabah west coast community's concern for those affected.

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