

Bringing home Malaysians held in Syria could be tough

By [T.N.Alagesh](#) - January 30, 2020 @ 5:55pm

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Bukit Aman Special Branch Counter-Terrorism Division (E8) chief Datuk Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay said intelligence reports indicated that IS was using such narrative to influence Malaysians and other nationalities from returning home. NSTP/ASROL AWANG

PEKAN: Malaysians stranded in Syria over suspected involvement in terrorism are discouraged from returning home by the Islamic State (IS), which continues to deceive them that the conflict is not over and the group will regain its lost territories soon.

Bukit Aman Special Branch Counter-Terrorism Division (E8) chief Datuk Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay said intelligence reports indicated that IS was using such narrative to influence Malaysians and other nationalities from returning home.

"IS is attempting to strengthen their ideology at camps where women and children are detained in Syria. We have obtained information that IS is influencing them not to return to their country of origin.

"The group is trying to control and convince Malaysians along with others, that IS will return in power, or 'brainwashing' them so that they will not plan their trips home," he told reporters after presenting his talk titled "Terrorism: Influence & Threats In the Country" at Universiti Malaysia Pahang's (UMP) "Bicara Cendekiawan Mulia" programme here today.

Ayob Khan said there were 56 Malaysians in Syria comprising 19 men, 12 women, 17 boys and eight girls at various camps in Syria.

He said records showed that there were 27 people - 10 adults and 17 children - at the Al-Houl camp, nine men at the Al-Hasakah prison, one person at the Idlib province in Syria, while the whereabouts of 19 other Malaysians including eight children remained unknown.

"Nine Malaysians comprising two women and seven children have contacted us and said they want to return to Malaysia. We were informed

that the camps in Syria are in a critical situation, especially due to food shortage.

“Once they are brought home, the men will be charged in court while for the women, it would depend on the level of

influence they were under; why they went to Syria, whether they were forced or cheated, and if there is enough proof then we will produce them in court,” he said, adding that the children would be sent to undergo rehabilitation programmes.

Meanwhile, speaking on deviant teachings, Ayob Khan urged Muslims in the country to refer to the state fatwa council if they have any queries and not refer to others who claim to be religious experts.

“Seek advice from the fatwa council and get their opinions on true Islamic teachings. This is to avoid people from being influenced by militants or deviant teachings which exploit the hadith (teachings from the life of Prophet Muhammad).

UMP vice-chancellor Professor Dr Wan Azhar Wan Yusoff was among some 200 university staff who attended the talk.