

The issue of illegal immigrants in relation with the Covid-19 cluster emergence in Sabah

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the issue of Malaysia's sovereignty and national security from external threats associated with the entry of Illegal Immigrants (PATI) and the emergence of Covid-19 cluster in Sabah. The context of the discussion started from the proclamation made by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong through a gazette to further enhance the action capacity of government enforcement in combating the Covid-19 pandemic, by referring to directives under the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance 2021 to maintain security, socioeconomic life or order civilians in the country from being threatened. In resolving public concerns, the thrust of this snapshot discussion is to identify the contributing factors of PATI entry in Sabah, and the impact of PATI entry in Sabah in terms of political, economic, social, and local security. The qualitative approach utilises secondary data content analysis methods, namely the results of research in journals, online news sources, reports and books. Observations of the discussion are embroidered with the relevance of the National Security Council Act (Act 776), the application of the Immigration Act 1959/63 (Act 155) and the Passport Act 1966 (Act 150) and the Immigration Regulations 1963 to reduce the increment rate in the entry of illegal immigrants into the country. Illegal immigrants (PATI) have crossed the border into Sabah illegally due to several factors, namely high currency exchange, many jobs offer, Sabah's strategic location, as well as the insecure and unstable state of origin. Although foreigners are able to improve the development process of the country and Sabah, they also cause many problems that threaten locals, especially in terms of economy and security. All levels of society need to work together to combat the issue of entry of illegal immigrants (PATI) so that the harmony and security of Sabah can be guaranteed, especially in the Covid-19 pandemic which has no signs of ending yet.