

Dept has ongoing op against migrants building settlements

PUTRAJAYA: The Immigration Department has denied not taking action against immigrants who set up squatter settlements in the outskirts of towns in Sabah.

Its director-general Datuk Khairul Dzaimie Daud said the department always monitors and conducts operations upon receiving reports or complaints from the public or other enforcement agencies.

“Sabah Immigration Department has implemented ‘Op Sapu’, which is an operation to check the documents of those occupying squatter houses, kongsi houses (workers’ quarters), rented houses, guest houses and houses of worship as well as foreign beggars.

“This is an on-going operation and not conducted because of the Covid-19 pandemic,” he said.

Khairul Dzaimie said the department conducted 371 operations last year with 1,300 migrants detained, while this year, more than 120 operations have been carried out with more than 500 foreigners detained.

He said the department often received complaints about immigrants building illegal settlements in certain areas, but when an

inspection was carried out, it was found that the structures were workers’ quarters.

“For example, in Selangor, there were claims of illegal settlements by immigrants in Sungai Buloh, but when we went to check, we found out that there were homes for construction workers in the area,” he said.

Khairul Dzaimie said that early

this year, the department conducted “Op Sapu” in the squatter areas of Kampung Numbak and Kampung Selamat Bahagia in the outskirts of Kota Kinabalu.

“Hundreds of foreigners were detained for various immigration offences, but many of them possess valid documents and are married to locals,” he added. — Bernama