

Refugee Review Tribunal

AUSTRALIA

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

Research Response Number: MYS31156
Country: Malaysia
Date: 21 December 2006

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This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Questions

1. Please provide background information with particular reference to Chinese Malaysians who claim to be shopkeepers targeted by gangsters for protection money, and whether they can obtain protection from the state.

RESPONSE

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State protection for ethnic Chinese

In 2004, there were just over eighty thousand police officers in Malaysia, serving a population of twenty two million, with another twenty three thousand officers to be recruited over the next five years. By the end of 2003, the Royal Malaysian Police Force or PDRM had absorbed four thousand new police personnel. Despite the rise in police numbers, crime continued to rise and there are reports that the police has abused Chinese Malaysians and the judiciary was unable to provide legal remedy to a number of complaints from the community (Ohashi, Y. 2004, 'Malaysia: More police and still more crime', *Asia Times Online*, 2 July http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/FG02Ae02.html – Accessed 19 December 2006 – Attachment 1; RRT Country Research 2006, Research Response MYS30607, 11 September – Attachment 2).

Targeting of Chinese by Criminals

Research on Malaysian Chinese was recently completed by the RRT Country Research on 11 September 2006 as *Research Response MYS30607*. This Response is supplied as Attachment

1 and it provides information on the treatment of the Chinese Malaysians by the Malaysian Muslim community and the role of the police and the judiciary in providing protection (RRT Country Research 2006, Research Response MYS30607, 11 September – Attachment 2).

The Malaysian Crime Prevention Foundation on 22 October 2006 released the latest statistics on crime. The data showed that there was 12.6 per cent increase in crime, compared to the 2005 figures. Unarmed gang robberies doubled from 27 per cent for the same period last year to 54 per cent this year ('Crime rate up by 12.6pc', 2006, *The Malay Mail*, 23 October – Attachment 3).

On 10 December 2006, a special unit was established by the Malaysian police to tackle the problem of illegal money lenders, who are repeatedly using violence to settle debts. The step was taken because pressure from criminal gangs has led to deaths and attempted suicide among Chinese Malaysians. Recently, there was a "murder of three children, allegedly by their parents, who were being harassed by the unlicensed money lenders". Many Chinese Malaysians in the past have sought assistance of the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) to prevent the lenders from harassing their families for payments ('Steps taken to curb the menace of loan sharks in Malaysia' 2006, *The Press Trust of India*, 10 December – Attachment 4; 'Coming down hard on Ah Long' 2006, *New Sunday Times*, 10 December – Attachment 5; 'Malaysians pay the cost' 2004, Focus on Malaysian website, 7 July source: *Associated Press* (7 July 2004) http://pgoh13.free.fr/euro_sharks.html – Accessed 20 December 2006 – Attachment 6).

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

Government Information & Reports

United Nations (UN)

Non-Government Organisations

International News & Politics

Region Specific Links

Topic Specific Links

Search Engines

Google search engine <http://www.google.com.au/>

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

List of Attachments

1. Ohashi, Y. 2004, 'Malaysia: More police and still more crime', *Asia Times Online*, 2 July http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/FG02Ae02.html – Accessed 19 December 2006.
2. RRT Country Research 2006, Research Response MYS30607, 11 September.

3. 'Crime rate up by 12.6pc', 2006, *The Malay Mail*, 23 October. (FACTIVA)
4. 'Steps taken to curb the menace of loan sharks in Malaysia' 2006, *The Press Trust of India*, 10 December. (FACTIVA)
5. 'Coming down hard on Ah Long' 2006, *New Sunday Times*, 10 December. (FACTIVA)
6. 'Malaysians pay the cost' 2004, *SBS*, 7 July http://pgoh13.free.fr/euro_sharks.html – Accessed 20 December 2006.