KEMENTERIAN TENAGA DAN SUMBER ASLI

KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

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ILLICIT TRADE

POACHERS RAKING IN MILLIONS SELLING WILDLIFE ORGANS

Illegal hunters active in forest reserves, says minister

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Wildlife organs that were seized from a restaurant at Kampung Kubang Rusa in Merapoh, near Kuala Lipis, Pahang, in 2011. FILE PIC

POACHERS have been making up to millions of ringgit from the sale of wildlife organs, including those of tigers and elephants.

Energy and Natural Resources Minister Datuk Seri Takiyuddin Hassan said poachers were active in forest reserves, including in Gua Musang, Kelantan.

Apart from killing wildlife in forest reserves, he said, the poachers also damaged camera traps set up by wildlife rangers.

"It cannot be denied that poachers are active in certain forest reserves, including in Gua Musang. The government believes this may also be the reason for the dwindling tiger population in the country.

"The poachers are not only killing tigers but also other wildlife, like elephants, to harvest their organs and sell them on the black market.

"Proactive measures, including setting up camera traps, have been taken by the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) to tackle the issue.

"We want to protect the animals, but poachers act aggressively by damaging the camera traps, with some even destroying the devices," said the Kota Baru member of parliament after handing donations to non-governmental organisations at his parliamentary service centre here yesterday.

He was commenting on a report that there were fewer than 150 Malayan tigers left in the country's jungles.

Takiyuddin said the government had taken action to tackle the issue, including setting up the National Tiger Conservation Task Force (MyTTF) recently.

"The Malayan tiger is on the coat of arms of Malaysia and the crests of states, ministries, departments and agencies.

"The government has taken extra measures to tackle the issue. The Keluarga Malaysia concept not only covers people and communities, but also animals.

"For the government, the death of a tiger, like the one that had to be shot by wildlife rangers in Gua Musang, is big a loss to the country."

On whether Perhilitan had received reports of tiger sightings in other districts in Kelantan, Takiyuddin said so far the sightings were only in Gua Musang.

"However, wildlife rangers from other agencies are monitoring the situation for the safety of the people in Gua Musang."