

MEF: Migrant worker rehiring programme missing the mark

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The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) today claimed that the Immigration Department's latest undocumented migrant worker rehiring programme misses the mark, as a large number of applications have been rejected.

Speaking to *The Malaysian Insight*, MEF executive director Shamsudin Bardan said that permits were only given out to 450,000 of 828,861 applicants.

"It did not achieve the target we hoped for. Of the submissions, 100,000 applications were rejected and 450,000 approved.

"As for the rest, they (workers and their employers) did not wish to continue with the process, as the workers did not complete their medical checkups or biometric applications, or they didn't have passports," he said.

Shamsudin added that those who had their applications rejected are now left with no more avenues to gain legal employment.

"Those who didn't make the cut can no longer apply, as the rehiring programme has ended, as has the 3+1 amnesty programme," he said.

The rehiring programme ended on June 30, while the 3+1 programme – which required workers to pay an RM300 fine and an additional RM100 for a pass enabling them to return home – ended on Aug 30.

On July 1, the Immigration Department launched yet another major operation, Ops Mega 3.0, to crack down on undocumented migrant workers.



Shamsudin was concerned that legal migrant workers would be caught during the raids, as many do not bring their work permits to work.

“Many of those who are legal do not bring their permits to work because it is not necessary for them to do so.

“But if they are caught, they will still be considered illegal, as they can’t produce legitimate working passes. How are they going to prove that they are legal workers?” he was quoted as saying.

Immigration Department director-general Mustafar Ali told *The Star* last month that Ops Mega 3.0 has thus far seen 5,444 undocumented migrants and 135 employers arrested.

In total, Mustafar said yesterday, more than 30,000 undocumented migrants have been detained since January.

Kepong lawmaker Lim Lip Eng previously urged the department to target human traffickers instead, who he said were the root cause of the high number of undocumented workers in the country.

Klang MP Charles Santiago, meanwhile, criticised the inhumane manner in which Immigration Department raids were being carried out, after a foreign employer had complained about her Filipino domestic worker being mistreated and arrested despite having valid documents.

Santiago also urged for the standard operating procedures of raids to be made public.