



E-WASTE GANGSTER LINKS REVEALED

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OP HAZARD

E-WASTE GANGSTER LINKS REVEALED

Authorities link illegal e-waste trade to money-laundering syndicates

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MOST factories involved in the disposal and processing of electronic waste (e-waste) have been found to be owned by thugs with suspected links to money-laundering syndicates.

Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad said authorities uncovered the involvement of these gangsters through Op Hazard, with some illegal e-waste factories also operated by foreigners.

"We obtained information during Op Hazard from 30 premises found to be operating illegally, where authorities discovered that most of the workers were foreign nationals or individuals misusing their permits.

"Most of these factories are not licensed by local authorities, with some located in industrial areas, while others operate outside industrial zones.

"These include locations such as reserved land, oil palm plantations and forested areas," he said in an interview.

At the same time, Nik Nazmi said a key challenge in preventing the illegal entry of e-waste is the authorities' reliance on random inspections.

This is due to the high cost of opening and inspecting a container, which

amounts to RM700 per inspection.

"We also lack scanners at ports to examine incoming containers, but this falls outside our jurisdiction," he said.

He added that this has resulted in false declarations under the HS Code, a system used for classifying imports and exports, as well as non-compliance with documentation requirements.

Meanwhile, to strengthen enforcement, he said the use of body cameras for Environment Department (DoE) enforcement officers is also being considered.

He added that coordination among all relevant agencies at ports, including the Customs Department, port authorities and the DoE, is being improved.

"We are also boosting collaboration with international organisations — including the Basel Convention Secretariat, the Asian Network and Interpol — to share intelligence on ships suspected of transporting e-waste to Malaysian ports.

"Cooperation has also been strengthened with domestic agencies to take action against illegal factory operations through an integrated approach involving the police, Occupational Safety and Health Department, Fire and Rescue Department and Customs Department.

"Other agencies involved include the Immigration Department, Land and District Office, local authorities, state water regulatory bodies, water supply companies, Energy Commission and Tenaga Nasional Bhd."

He said these efforts aim to ensure that illegal e-waste processing factories can be tackled through strict enforcement.

He said the ministry, through the DoE

and in collaboration with police, is committed to continuing Op Hazard to combat the illegal importation and processing of e-waste.

In a related development, he said the amount of e-waste generated from 2005 to 2023 stood at 2,618,307.30 metric tonnes.

"During this period, the highest e-waste generation was recorded in 2020, amounting to 904,008.90 metric tonnes, surpassing all other years.

"The collection and processing of e-waste in each state began in 2005, in line

with the gazettelement and enforcement of the Environmental Quality (Scheduled Waste) Regulations 2005."

He added that the total e-waste generated nationwide in 2023 was 65,280.14 metric tonnes, compared with 286,205.84 metric tonnes in 2022.

Melaka recorded the highest e-waste generation in 2023, with 26,089.68 metric tonnes, followed by Penang (13,004.61 metric tonnes), Selangor (6,890.02 metric tonnes) and Negri Sembilan (6,833.05 metric tonnes).



Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad