

Fear of detention overriding fear of getting Covid-19



By MAZWIN NIK ANIS, WANI MUTHIAH and RASHVINJEET S. BEDI

NATION

Thursday, 29 Jul 2021

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)



Home



For You



Bookmark



Audio



Search



In line for inoculation: Volunteers checking vaccination appointment details of foreign workers at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. — FAIHAN GHANI/The Star

PETALING JAYA: The government must give its assurance that undocumented migrant workers and refugees going for their Covid-19 vaccinations will not be detained by the authorities, several groups have said.

Migrants rights groups and the Indonesian Embassy sought a guarantee from the authorities that undocumented migrants would not be arrested.

Privacy - Terms



Home



For You



Bookmark



Audio



Search

Alex Ong of Migrant Care said that many were concerned as the Immigration Department had been carrying out raids against undocumented migrants.

“If they are arrested, they will be placed in detention centres where the chance of contracting the virus is high.

“They want their vaccinations but at the same time are scared,” he added.

“The best solution for undocumented foreign workers and refugees might be to use mobile units.”

Indonesian Ambassador to Malaysia Hermono said the main concern of many undocumented Indonesians was getting picked up by the authorities, especially after their vaccination.

“They are also worried that they have to submit personal information including their contact numbers,” he said, adding that he hoped the authorities could clear the air about the issue with him.

Adrian Pereira, executive director of North South Initiative (NSI), concurred with Ong and Hermono on the reluctance of migrants to be vaccinated.

He said there was also the issue of communicating with undocumented migrants about signing the consent form.

“They can’t be signing something they don’t understand,” he added.

Alliance of Chin Refugees chairman James Bawi Thang Bik said the main issue was how the authorities were going to verify the identities of recipients.

“There are many undocumented people from Myanmar who don’t have valid documents,” he said.

He added that there were no details as to how the vaccination process for this group of people would be handled, and many of them believed they might be walking into “traps” when they go to vaccination centres.

“They are afraid that once they give their address, the Immigration Department will conduct a raid and detain them,” said James.

Siyin Organisation of Malaysia secretary Daniel Lian Khawm Mung said that while they were happy with the move to vaccinate them, many v

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)



Home



For You



Bookmark



Audio



Search

"I hope the Malaysian government will not do that, on humanitarian grounds, as it will deter undocumented migrants from getting vaccinated," he added.

According to Alliance of Chin Refugees' James, as at February 2020, there were 50,000 Myanmar Chin refugees in Malaysia, with 22,500 of them holding UN High Commission for Refugees cards or some form of identity document, while the others were undocumented.

Human Trafficking Watch chairman Dewi Kholifah Hamzah said it was good of the Malaysian government to offer free vaccinations to undocumented foreigners.

"Many of those who are undocumented came here with the belief they would be legalised by their local employers but that did not happen," she added.

She said many of them opted to remain here to clear their debts and feed their families.

National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme coordinating minister Khairy Jamaluddin announced last week that the government had agreed to vaccinate undocumented immigrants and refugees.

However, Immigration Department director-general Datuk Khairul Dzaimee Daud's recent statement asking illegal immigrants to be immediately registered under the Labour Recalibration Programme or the Repatriation Recalibration Plan has stoked fear in those living in the country illegally.

He was reported to have said that foreigners living here illegally could be punished under Sections 6(1)(C) and 15(1)(C) of the Immigration Act and would be deported after their sentence.

Related stories:

[Fast-tracking renewal process](#)

Join our [Telegram](#) channel to get our Evening Alerts and breaking news highlights

TAGS / KEYWORDS:

[Undocumented Migrants](#) , [Refugees](#) , [Indonesian Embassy](#) , [Alex Ong](#) , [Migrant Care](#) , [Immigration Dept](#) , [Hermono](#) , [Adrian Pereira](#) , [Alliance Of Chin Refugees](#) , [Jam](#)

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)



Home



For You



Bookmark



Audio



Search

How useful is this article to you?



100% of our readers find this article useful

Found a mistake in this article?

Report it to us.



Stories You'll Enjoy

NATION 19h ago

Shouting match erupts in Dewan Rakyat after Opposition MP questions PM's support

STARPICKS

HUAWEI launches its innovative MatePad 11 and powerful MateBook D15 with great...

MARKETS 13h ago

Trading bounce for Bursa Malaysia

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)



Home



For You



Bookmark



Audio



Search

NATION 13h ago

Wee is all praise for KJ's NIP presentation

STARPLUS 23 Jul 2021

Malaysia's vaccination rate speeds past the US

NATION 6m ago 

Parliament adjourns temporarily after statement from Palace

SWIMMING 2h ago

Olympics-Swimming-American Dressel wins men's 100m freestyle gold

NATION 21h ago

Covid-19: Unnecessary NPRA red-tape delayed vaccine procurement, says Saifuddin...

LETTERS 4h ago

Rude awakening as politicians showed their true colours

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)

Home



For You



Bookmark



Audio



Search

NATION 13h ago

Experts to advise government on
booster shots next week

NATION 13h ago

Well ahead of schedule

NATION 13h ago

Over 70% of teachers are vaccinated,
says Khairy

[Load More](#)

Subscriptions

[The Star Digital Access](#)[SMS Services](#)[Newsstand](#)[Other Publications](#)

Company Info

[About Us](#)[Job Opportunities](#)[Investor Relations](#)

Policies

[Privacy Statement](#)

Advertising

[Our Rate Card](#)[Classifieds](#)

Help

[Contact Us](#)[FAQs](#)[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)[Home](#)[For You](#)[Bookmark](#)[Audio](#)[Search](#)



Subscribe to our FREE newsletter!

Enter Your Email Address Here

Subscribe

Copyright © 1995- 2021 Star Media Group Berhad (10894D)
Best viewed on Chrome browsers.

[Privacy](#) - [Terms](#)



Home



For You



Bookmark



Audio



Search