Prisons Department denies abuse

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<p />PUTRAJAYA: Allegations that some secondary school students sent for a motivation camp at Kluang Prison were physically abused are baseless, said the Prisons Department.
Director-general Datuk Wira Zulkifli Omar said early investigations showed that no force was used on 33 SMK Bandar Baru Uda students who attended the 3D/2N crime prevention programme organised by Koperasi Penjara (Kopen).

The students said they were mistreated while the parents claimed the school had not obtained their consent for the camp.

�We have not received any negative comments from six other camps held since April this year either," he said at a press conference here yesterday.

Also present was Education director-general Datuk Abd Ghaffar Mahmud.

Zulkifli said the department would conduct detailed investigations and action would be taken against anyone found to have exceeded their powers. A final report is expected by Friday.

He said the programme was held with the approval of the district education office, the school and the parent-teacher association.

�It is aimed at instilling self-confidence in the students and exposing them to the dangers of misusing drugs as well as crime prevention.

�The students were housed at the prison's training centre in Kluang and were required to wake up early, take part in drills, and attend classes,� he said.

A meeting with the parents and students involved is scheduled for today.

In JOHOR BARU, the programme's facilitator Sharil Basir said at least 60 students have attended the camp at Kluang Prison.

He said response to the programme has been positive with many parents giving the thumbs-up.

Sharil, who is an employee of Kluang Prison, said that he had been working with troubled teens since 2009.

�This year, a decision was made to bring students directly into the prison to experience first-hand the life as a prisoner,� he said.

He added that students' safety was paramount and there was no interaction with prisoners.

Johor education director Mohd Nor A. Ghani said a report had been submitted to the Education Ministry on the incident.</p>