

<p>Sept 15, 2009, Tuesday - KUALA LUMPUR: Several Sara-wak non-governmental organisations, claiming to fight for the cause of Penan girls and women who were allegedly raped, have refused to assist police in their investigations.</p>
<p></p><p></p><p>CID director Comm Datuk Seri Mohd Bakri Zinin said police had held three meetings with the NGOs but none of them brought any witnesses who could help in the probe.</p><p></p><p></p><p>The Inspector-General of Police, Tan Sri Musa Hassan, and I never treat rape or any form of sexual abuse cases lightly.</p><p></p><p></p><p>We have always placed such cases with high or top priority and have held numerous discussions on such topics with NGOs,</p><p></p><p></p><p>Comm Mohd Bakri said Musa and him met with several NGOs on Jan 2 to discuss the alleged rape of Penan girls and women.</p><p></p><p></p><p>He added that he was appointed by Musa to head a special task force comprising officers from Bukit Aman and the Sarawak police.</p><p></p><p></p><p>The officers visited nine settlements where the alleged rapes, molest and sexual abuse took place.</p><p></p><p></p><p>We faced numerous obstacles in our investigations including non-cooperation by the alleged victims and witnesses.</p><p></p><p></p><p>Another meeting with the Sarawak NGOs was held on Jan 20 where I pleaded with them to assist police by bringing the victims and witnesses to meet the task force members so that we can get to the bottom of the matter.</p><p></p><p></p><p>Our plea fell on deaf ears. Despite that, we called for another meeting on Aug 17 and I once again pleaded with them but to no avail.</p><p></p><p></p><p>Comm Mohd Bakri said that since 1995, police had investigated 14 rape cases in the Baram district, four of them involving Penan women.</p><p></p><p></p><p>Out of the four, he said three included the cases reported to police last year.</p><p></p><p></p><p>He said the cases could not be brought to court due to insufficient evidence.</p><p></p><p></p><p>Police conduct investigations within the perimeters of the law and offenders are brought to court only when there is sufficient evidence.</p><p></p><p></p><p>Irrefutable evidence is essential to a successful rape prosecution as mere filing of a rape case in court without such evidence is an exercise in futility and may bring about serious legal repercussions,</p><p></p><p></p><p>he said. </p>