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Non-traditional security threats can jeopardise sovereignty

KUALA LUMPUR: The Asean community, especially Malaysians, must understand that non-traditional security threats, if not effectively tackled, can jeopardise national security and sovereignty.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) geostrategist Dr Azmi Hassan said it is important for people in this region to understand what is meant by non-traditional security threat as they are unaware that it is rampant in their societies.

"Non-traditional security threats are something which are rarely given attention to by society, but if it happens, it can threaten the nation or the surrounding areas, and even create conflicts in relations between nations.

"In the Asean context, such as in human trafficking, it is not a problem of national security, but it can threaten the sovereignty and relations between two countries," he said in an interview recently.

Azmi said the intrusions in Lahad Datu, Sabah in 2013 were an example how non-traditional security threats became bloody incidents.

"About 20 years ago, the presence of foreigners was not a security threat but now this could disrupt security, resulting in us having to form the Eastern Sabah Security Command."

He said the increase in the number of Malaysians and other nationalities involved in the Islamic State militant group, as they were influenced by ideologies which were

supposedly based on religion, was proof of how non-traditional security threats could be prone to extremism. "We can categorise IS as a non-traditional threat, as it is not a formal group, nation or organisation," he said.

Azmi added this was why it was important for Asean to be united to resolve the issue, including sharing intelligence information.

Meanwhile, Universiti Utara Malaysia's Dean of the College of Law, Government and International Studies associate professor Dr Ahmad Marthada Mohamed said Malaysia as chairman of Asean 2015 has an advantage as it is known for unity and harmony in a multiracial society. — *Bernama*