

Reports of Sri Lankans detained in Malaysia

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been receiving media queries relating to news reports regarding the arrest and detention of Sri Lankans in Malaysia.

The Royal Malaysian Police Special Branch has confirmed that 131 persons believed to be Sri Lankans have been detained at Tanjung Gamoh, Sedili, in Johor Baru on 1 May 2018. Out of the 131 persons, 127 have been arrested under the Immigration Act 1959/63. They are presently detained at Pekan Nenas Immigration Detention Centre in Johor Baru. The remaining 4 persons have been arrested under the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act of 2007 and are also detained.

At present, investigations are still underway, and officials of the Sri Lanka High Commission in Malaysia are working closely with the relevant Malaysian authorities in this connection. While the identities of the 131 persons are still in the process of being determined, initial information indicate that 43 of the 131 persons arrested hold identity cards issued by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

Further information regarding the individuals arrested will be shared when available, and as appropriate, respecting the need to ensure that information thus shared does not jeopardize the investigations that are presently underway.

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Colombo*

6 May 2018