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INDONESIA

Tsunami orphans available for the right price

by Mathias Hariyadi

Jakarta (AsiaNews) – Volunteers from the Muslim-based Justice and Prosperity Party (PKS) claim that “human lives” are being bought and sold in some of the refugee camps in North Sumatra’s provincial capital of Medan.

Unidentified individuals have seemingly tried to buy tsunami-orphaned children or children whose parents are missing in order to resell them.



PKS officials stressed that human trafficking is happening and must be investigated. According to PKS’s executive member Soeripto, “it is urgent to look closely at what is happening. For this reason, we have set up a search centre at Medan’s airport”.

Indonesia’s Social Affairs Minister Bachtiar Chamsyah is also worried and has called on the police “to put a stop” to this trade in human lives. He told his ministry’s officials to take care of the orphans and stressed that any adoptions must be handled by the appropriate agency, the Aceh Agreement Association (*Perkumpulan Aceh Sepakat* or PAS), which is responsible for orphan adoptions.

Speaking to journalists, the Minister said that PAS officials are better acquainted with the issue and can better deal with the children, adding that the government has prohibited any instant adoptions to minimise the possibility of human trafficking.

Mr Chamsyah reiterated that “adoptions are legal only through proper legal channels under the supervision of the Social Affairs Ministry”.

Currently, children are housed at rehabilitation centres in Pancing, Medan, in the care of Ministry and PAS official, where they can be under “greater protection”.

In a show of solidarity towards the affected population, the government of Singapore is making its hospitals and other health care facilities available to those hurt and injured.

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