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Philippine officials seize more goods from Sabah

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Kota Kinabalu: The smuggling of essential goods from Malaysia through Sabah like sugar, rice and cooking oil is still being actively carried out by Filipino traders despite strict enforcement by both the Malaysian and Philippine authorities at sea.

The illegal activities deny government tax revenue and violate rules and regulations of the Bureau of Customs and related agencies of both governments.

The Philippine Coast Guard last Sunday again seized 1,700 sacks of smuggled sugar from a Philippine-registered wooden hulled vessel.

This time around, the confiscation happened off the coast of Pilas Island in the Province of Basilan in southern Mindanao.



Coast Guard Zamboanga Lieutenant Commander Norriel Ramos said M/B Fatima Shakira was carrying 1,700 sacks of sugar believed smuggled out of Malaysia.

"My personnel were on seaborne patrol when they spotted and inspected the boat Sunday (Aug 19), Ramos said.

Authorities are now conducting an investigation to track down the consignee of the confiscated sugar.

Last week, the Philippine Coast Guard seized 5,000 sacks of smuggled sugar in the vicinity of Mapun Island in the province of Tawi-Tawi.

The Bureau of Customs also apprehended an estimated P15 million worth of smuggled sugar at the Manila International Container Terminal.

Customs Commissioner Isidro Lapeña earlier said sugar smuggling may be part of a scheme that allows unscrupulous traders to manipulate the price of sugar in the market.

Also on Aug 18 in Tawau, a 29-year old local was nabbed by marine police for trying to smuggle 150 boxes of cooking oil of Cap Kapal brand to the neighbouring country via Tanjung Baru water about 6pm Saturday (Aug. 18).

The suspect was heading to Sebastian Island from Tanjung Baru waters and was detained after he failed to produce approval letter from the Ministry of Domestic Trade, Cooperation and Consumerism pertaining to the cooking oil. - Nikko Fabian

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