

## Trends and Patterns of Property Crime at Hotspot Areas in Sabah

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### ABSTRACT

The problem of crime is not a new issue to be highlighted, but its rate of increase has raised concerns of many parties, especially to the mass media coverage and academics of various disciplines. It can be argued that the increase of crime goes with the rapid development of a city. Although combating crime is the responsibility of everyone, the increased crime rate has raised questions on the effectiveness of the Royal Malaysian Police Force to combat at the enforcement level. Lack of study and research on crime problems from most disciplines, especially in the field of geography, is one of the main contributors to the lack of effectiveness of crime prevention at the grassroots level. This is because, only the field of geography emphasizes research on a problem in space and location. Therefore, this paper tries to highlight the results of research on the problem of property crime in Sabah for a period of two decades, namely 1990-2013 based on the approach of geographical disciplines. However, to facilitate the context of the discussion of this paper, crime in Sabah is examined from the aspect of patterns and various dimensions of crime trends in the five crime hotspot districts in Sabah.

Keywords: Crime, Patterns, Trends, Property Crime, Sabah.

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### Introduction

This paper attempts to explain the increase in property crime in five hotspot districts in Sabah. The five hotspot districts involved in this research are in Kota Kinabalu, Penampang, Tawau, Lahad Datu and Sandakan and all the districts listed are urban areas that are rapidly developing in terms of infrastructure, facilities and social. Crime is often concentrated in urban areas because the geographical characteristics of the area such as demographic, social, economic and ecological profiles of development contribute to its increase. Nevertheless, there is lack of research and studies that respond to this problem (Tang, 2009; Baharom and Muzafar, 2009). The lack of scientific resources also makes it difficult for the study of crime to be conducted more comprehensively.

The National Crime Index statistics are projected to continue to increase in line with population growth (Sidhu, 2006). From these statistics it shows that peace, security and quality of life can be affected due to the above factors. These three items are indicators of safety aspects in the Malaysian Quality of Life Index (IKHM) (refer to IKHM, 2002; 2004; Malaysia, 1996; 2001; 2006; Norhaslina, 2006; Jamaludin, 2007, Saifuddin, 2010). The increase in crime means the existence of social problems that can be considered as things that affect the image of the country. The increase in crime is receiving serious attention causing

the government to be committed to taking various continuous approaches so as to make the aspect of crime as an important matter in the national development agenda (Malaysia, 2011; 2006; 2001; 1996).

### **Crime Scenario in Malaysia**

Crime is one of the social problems that plague most cities in the world, including Malaysia. Various parties have shown the success of the country's achievements and criminal position at the international level. Interpol reported that Malaysia recorded a high success in resolving criminal cases which was between 30-35 percent (2004), 48 percent (2005) and 50 percent (2006) compared to Interpol's ruling of only 19 or 20 percent. Malaysia Crime Prevention Foundation (MCPF), PDRM is one of the best police forces among developing countries around the world (Berita Harian, 12 February 2008). In addition, the United Nations reported Malaysia among the 163 surviving countries of the crime and drug prevention study in 2005-2007 (New Straits Times, 21 November 2010). The World Justice Project Rules of Law Index also reports that Malaysia is the safest country in the group of 19 high middle -income countries, which is safer than the United States and Britain (Berita Harian, 3 April 2012; GTP Annual Report, 2011). According to the Global Peace Index or Global Peace Index (GPI) in 2011 released by the Institute for Economic Peace (IEP) to measure peace between countries and regions of the world, Malaysia for the first time won the title of "safest country" and "most peaceful" from a pool of 153 countries (IEP, 2011).

In this regard, Malaysia is ranked 17th safest and most secure in the world in 2017 compared to its 19th rank in 2011. Apart from that, Malaysia is also the first, safest and most peaceful country in the Southeast Asian region and 4th safest in the Asia Pacific region after New Zealand, Japan and Australia (Daily News, 3 April 2012; GTP Annual Report, 2011). According to the report of the Global Economic Competitiveness Forum or World Economic Forum (WEF) 2011, also ranked Malaysia 63rd compared to 93rd in 2010 and 2011 in terms of security and peace (Berita Harian, 7 March 2012; 3 April 2012) . Apart from that, the study of the perception of the level of satisfaction of Malaysians towards PDRM, 70.5 percent of the public in Malaysia are satisfied with the achievements of PDRM in December 2011 compared to 56.6 percent in January 2011. The study on crime reduction by the International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM), the findings show criminal anxiety decreased 12 percent, from 33 percent in 2010 to 21 percent in 2011 (GTP, 2011; Daily News, April 3, 2012).

Although various parties have reported on the success of PDRM in terms of solving criminal cases and excellence at the international level, but it is not enough to convince the public of the crime problem scenario. This is because, referring to the national crime index for the period 1980-2008 is showing a significant increase and most of which is 85 percent contributed by property crime (Mohd Reduan, 1990; Sidhu 2005; 2006; Muzafar and Eng, 2006; Muzafar and Law , 2007; Baharom and Muzafar, 2009; Muzafar and Baharom, 2009; Tang, 2009; PDRM, 2004; 2007; 2008; Nor-Ina, 2006; Nor-Ina and Norizan, 2007a, b; 2008a, b; 2009; 2010 ). Referring to the Malaysian Quality of Life Index (IKHM) report, the crime rate in the country is high (IKHM, 2002) and for the period 1990-2004, showed an

increase except for the public safety and environmental components of -21.5 and -0.3 respectively (9th Malaysia Plan; IKHM, 2004). As much as 85 per cent of the reported crimes in the country were largely contributed by property crimes compared to violent crimes which only covered 15 per cent for the period 1980 to 2008.

Although more than 85 percent of crime in the country involves property crime, in recent months the country has been rocked by an increase in cases of gun violence that have occurred on a large scale, causing an increase in insecurity and high anxiety among the community from various levels as a whole. calculate place and status. The sophistication of science and technology is the catalyst for the increase of this problem coupled with the increase in the country's population of 28 million people with a ratio of 1: 250 police personnel and a large number of 112, 583 people involved in administrative duties (Harian Ekspres, 15 August 2013).

Recognizing the crime scenario that will invite the existence of other social problems and symbolize the shortcomings and image of the country, the government does not give up but continues to strive and is committed to take a continuous approach as a measure to address it to improve the quality of life of society as a whole (Malaysia, 1996; 2001; 2006). In addition, to drive the country's socio-economic growth towards a high-income nation in the future, the country needs to be competitive in a conducive environment to generate Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and increase the country's tourism sector as contained in 12 National Key Economic Areas (NKEAs) that have high potential to drive the country's economic growth in the 10th Malaysia Plan (10MP), the problem of crime also continues to be given attention to make the aspect of crime in the national development plan agenda and among the wrong an element in the framework for the formation of the National Key Result Area (NKRA) or National Key Result Area which is one of the areas identified, given priority and emphasis by the country to achieve the goals of the Government Transformation Program (GTP) based on the principle of 'People First, Achievement Foremost.' Although there have been many approaches and efforts made to tackle crime, the country's crime rate is still less effectively addressed as a whole and some communities point fingers at the police authorities over the failure and ineffectiveness of crime prevention.

### **Property Crime Scenario at Hotspot Areas in Sabah**

The property crime rate in the Tawau district showed an increase to 135 cases from January 1, 2017 to February 7 compared to 122 cases in the same period last year. Tawau District Police Chief, Assistant Commissioner Fadil Marsus explained that the crimes that contributed seriously to the increase consisted of theft and burglary cases with the crime rate increasing by 13 cases or 10.7 percent. He added that, apart from the PDRM, the community also needs to be concerned by monitoring the safety of their neighborhoods to reduce property crime. Meanwhile, from the point of view of investigation for the crime index, there were 71 cases successfully resolved involving 135 investigation papers were completed until the charges were made equivalent to 50 percent of the charges and it is a good achievement. (Bernama, February 8, 2017). Police have successfully solved a total of 25 property crime and robbery cases following the arrest of 11 suspects in six separate cases during June 2017. Sandakan

District Police Chief ACP Zabidi Mohd Zain explained that it involved the seizure of 29 units of goods, seven motorcycles and two lorries. Property crimes involve theft of motorcycles, cars, lorries and burglary. The suspects involved consisted of 11 men aged between 21 and 43 years and all of them tested positive for syabu. He added that the success of the arrest was the result of the community's cooperation in channeling information to the police. This to some extent shows that the cooperation between the police and the community is able to defeat the activities of property crime that occur in the surrounding area.

At the same time, one of the cases involved the arrest of a group of five men consisting of four foreigners and a local who were active in stealing motorcycles, lorries and burglary around the Sandakan district, including a mosque in Kampung Bakau. A total of 17 case items were seized from the syndicate including four motorcycles and a lorry. In a separate case, the police also managed to crack down on a Euro 2016 football gambling activity with the arrest of three men aged between 28 and 51 in a raid on a food premise in Block 42 Jalan Coastal and involved the seizure of cash worth RM3,729, points 1,780 Peso money, two mobile phones and a laptop. (Bernama, 30 June 2016). Looking at the crime scenario that occurred in Tawau and Sandakan as reported in the current press media has led to a more in - depth discussion on property crime based on the perceptions of respondents in five hotspot districts in Sabah. The discussion of this paper is extended by examining the crime trends in Sabah between 1990 to 2013 and looking at the comparison of property crime trends in five hotspot districts in Sabah between the years (2005-2013).

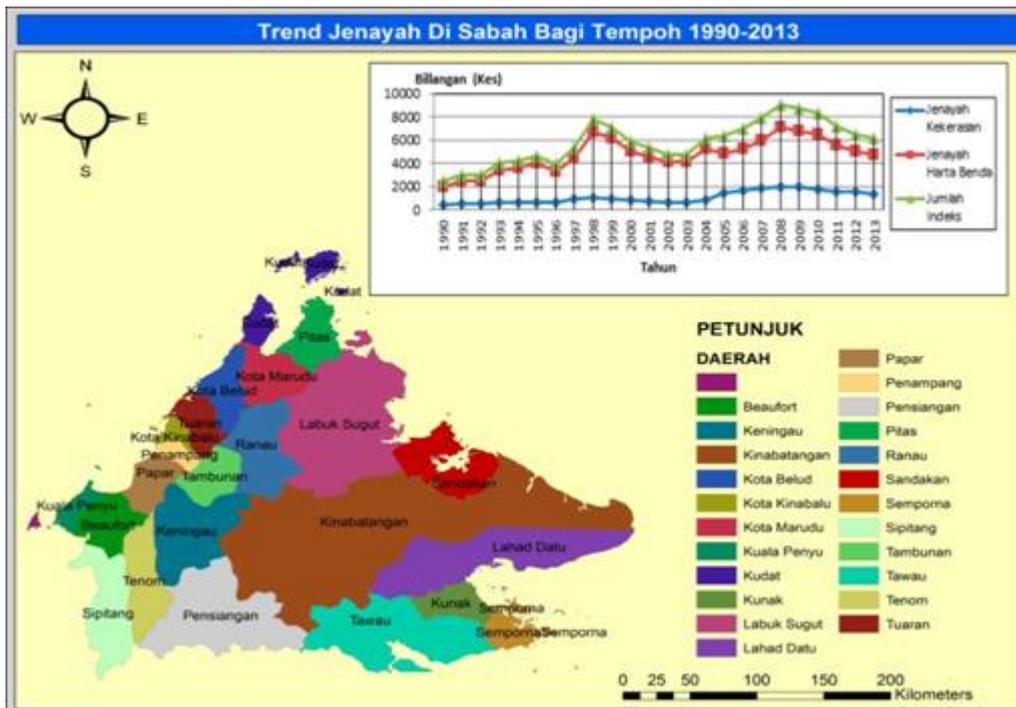
### **Methodology**

The writing of this paper uses primary and secondary data types. The results of expert surveys as well as in -depth interview techniques conducted with PDRM and research on the sources of reports issued by PDRM have led to the production of trend analysis in the map display as shown in the next section. The use of questionnaires to obtain data on perceptions of crime in hotspot areas in Sabah. The discussion of this paper is extended by examining the crime trends in the State of Sabah between 1990 to 2013.

### **Study Findings**

This section discusses the crime trends of Sabah (1990-2013) a comparison of property crime trends of five districts in Sabah (2005-2013) and also the perception of the frequency of property crime in Sabah.

#### **(i) Crime Trends in Sabah (1990-2013)**



Map 1: Sabah Crime Trends for the Period 1990-2013

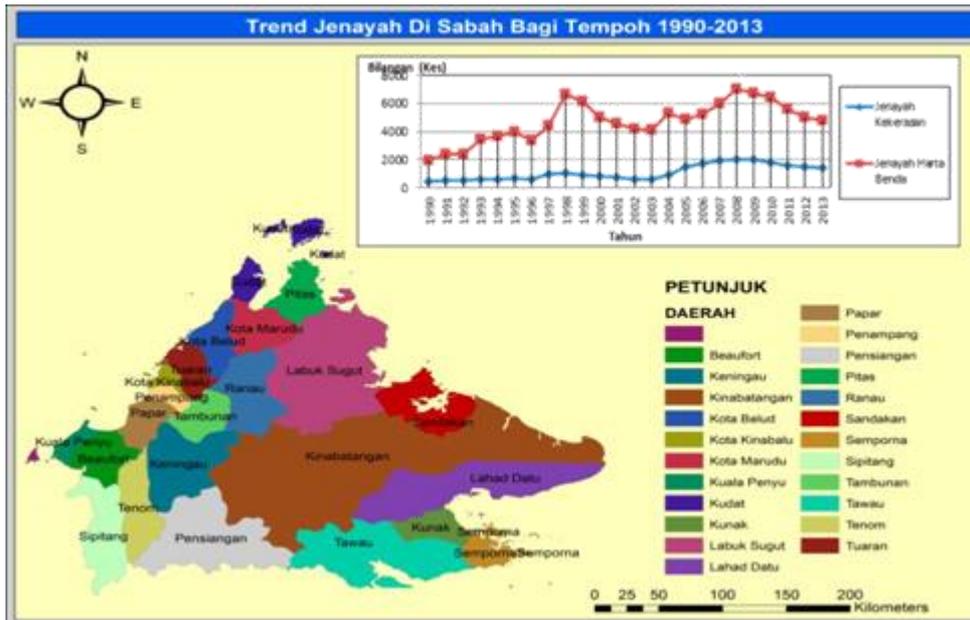
Source: Ibu Pejabat Polis Kontinjen Sabah, 2014

Based on the statistical analysis of the Sabah Contingent PDRM Report (2014), the trend of Sabah crime index for the period 1990-2013, showed an increase of

4 times for the period (1990-1991), (1993-1995), (1997-1998) and (2004-2008). As for the aspect of reducing the index crime trend in Sabah, it shows a decrease in crime trend only for three time periods, namely the year (1996), (1999-2003) and (2009-2013). For the period (1990-1991) showed an increase in cases of 500 cases or 20.2 percent while in the following year the crime was static. During the period (1993-1995) the crime index in Sabah was found to have increased again with the number of cases increasing by 636 or 15.7 percent and is the highest increase. Nevertheless, the crime index in Sabah has declined in 1996 with a total reduction of 713 cases or 15.2 percent. The economic downturn in Malaysia around 1997 has also caused crime in Sabah to increase by 2417 cases or 45.2 percent in the period (1997-1998). The government's committed efforts in restoring the economic situation and crime control in Malaysia, including Sabah, have succeeded in reducing the crime rate in Sabah in the next five years (1999-2003) with the number of cases decreased by 2347 cases or 33.2 percent.

Crime statistics in Sabah showed a relatively significant increase in the period (2004-2008) with the number of cases increasing by 2887 cases or 46.8 percent. The increase in cases during the period was the highest compared to the increase in the previous year. Due to the efforts of the government, PDRM, the cooperation of agencies and the community in curbing crime, the crime rate has been successfully reduced by 2568 cases or 29.3 percent of cases in the period (2009-2013). However, the decline in index crime during this period could not overcome the increased number of cases in the period (2004-2008) and experienced a

decrease of three times in the period (1996), (1999-2003) and (2009-2013). However, the decline in index crime during this period could not offset the increasing number of cases during the period (2004-2008). Therefore, crime control requires more strategic crime prevention planning from time to time and every crime prevention measure should be modified and in line according to the suitability of the environment and the context of the time, given the rising cost of living. Sabah in particular and is one of the factors in crime. In terms of comparing crime categories in Sabah, the research found that property crime was more dominant than violent crime at 81.2% (113244 cases) and 18.8% (26,202 cases) respectively out of a total of 139,446 cases for the period 1990-2013.



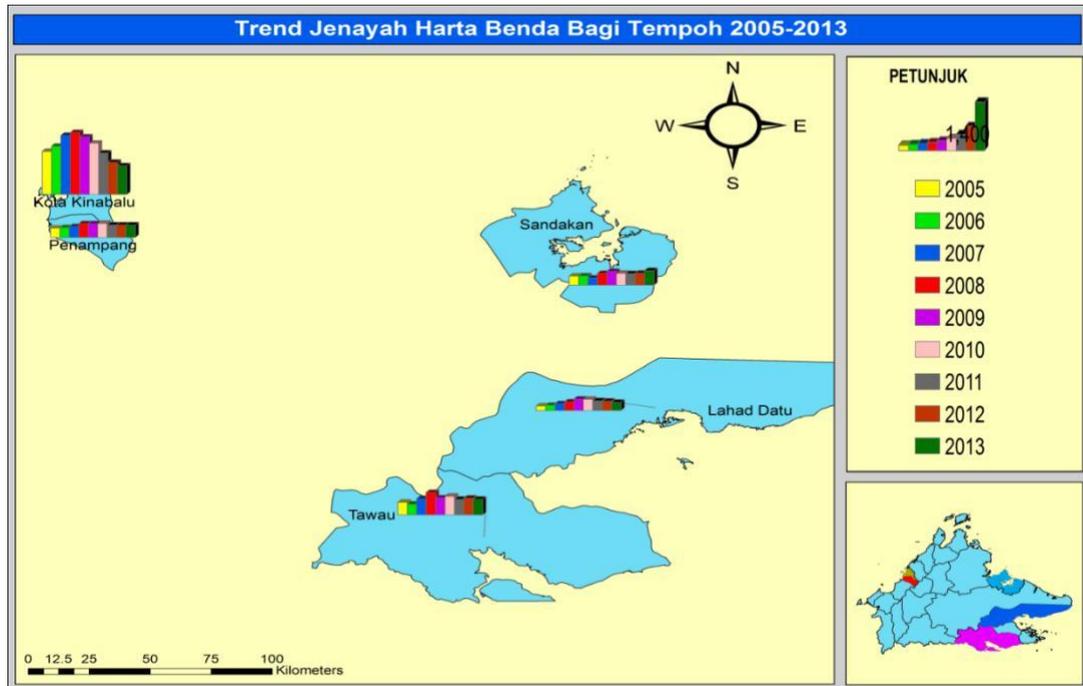
Map 2: Trends in Violent Crime and Property Crime in Sabah for the Period 1990-2013

Source: Ibu Pejabat Polis Kontinjen Sabah, 2014

The trend of property crime in Sabah increased fourfold during the period (1990-1995), (1997-1998), (2004) and (2006-2008) and decreased fourfold during the period (1996), (1999-2003), (2005) and (2009-2013). The results of the analysis show that property crime in Sabah increased by 2015 cases or 101.4 percent in the period (1990-1995). In (1996) property crime accounted for 655 or 16.3 percent of cases. The total decrease in crime was found to be still low during the period. For the next two years (1999-1998) property crime showed the highest increase with the number of cases increasing by 2289 cases or 52.3 percent. The high increase in cases during the period was due to the influence of the economic recession and many of the workers were laid off thus contributing to the commission of crime. However, property crime has shown a decrease in the next period (1999-2003) with a total reduction of 2030 cases or 33.0 percent. From the number, it can be seen that the decrease in crime still can not cope with the increase in the number of cases in the previous year (1999-1998). In 2004, crime in Sabah was found to increase again with an increase of 1163 cases or 28.2 percent and then showed a decrease in 2005 which was 415 cases or 7.8 percent. Property crime analysis in Sabah has increased by 1802 cases or 34.4 percent in the year (2006-2008)

and has decreased in the period (2009-2013) by 1962 cases or 29 percent. The decrease in property crime shows the government's commitment in reducing property crime in Sabah because the decrease in the year -end period could outweigh the number of cases in the previous year. Next, the discussion continued by examining the comparison of property crime trends in five hotspot districts in Sabah between the years (2005-2013).

**(ii) Comparison of Property Crime Trends at Five District in Sabah (2005-2013)**



Map 3: Property Crime Trends for the Period 2005-2013

Source: Ibu Pejabat Polis Kontinjen Sabah, 2014

The results of the study on the trend of property crime in Sabah according to five districts, namely Kota Kinabalu, Penampang, Sandakan, Lahad Datu and Tawau, the results show that Kota Kinabalu recorded the highest trend rate compared to other districts in Sabah. The second highest property crime trend is followed by Tawau, third Penampang, fourth Sandakan and the lowest is Lahad Datu. Based on Map 3, the trend of property crime in Kota Kinabalu occurs in two phases, namely increasing and the second phase decreasing. In the first phase, for a period of four years (2005-2008), the trend of property crime has shown a continuous increase of 878 cases or 43.6. However, property crime in Kota Kinabalu was found to have decreased in the second phase (2009-2013) with a total decrease of 1340 cases or 49.9 percent. In Tawau, property crime statistics show an uneven trend. For the period (2005-2006) the trend of property crime in Tawau has decreased by 85 cases or 14.3 percent. In the year (2007-2008) property crime has increased with an increase of 281 cases or 36.9 percent. However, a review of property crime data found that criminal cases had decreased in 2009 with a total reduction of 249 cases or 23.8 percent. During

2010, property crime in Tawau has increased again by 80 cases or 10.8 percent. For the following period, property crime in Tawau has decreased by 140 cases or 16.0 percent and increased again in 2012 with an increase of 51 cases or 6.9 percent. The study also found that property crime in Tawau decreased in 2013 by 48 cases or 6.1 percent. Property crime statistics in Penampang found that the trend movement occurred in four phases, namely in the first phase (2005-2008) property crime has increased with the number of cases increased by 210 cases or 48.2 percent. In the second phase (2009) property crime in Penampang was static with a figure of 645 cases as in 2008. However, in the third phase (2010) property crime has increased again by 13 cases or 2.0 percent. For the fourth phase, in the period (2011-2013), the trend of property crime in Penampang has decreased by 6 cases or 1.0 percent.

A study on property crime trends in Sandakan found that crime in the area occurs in five phases. Based on Figure 266 and Table 2.2, property crime in Sandakan increased in two years (2005-2006) with an increase of 13 cases or 3.1 percent. However, the property crime rate in Sandakan has decreased in the second phase (2007) with a total decrease of 99 cases or 23.1 percent. In the third phase (2008-2009) property crime in Sandakan was found to increase by 101 cases or 18.7 percent. Property crime statistics have declined again in the fourth phase (2010-2011) with a reduction of 14 cases or 2.5 percent. In the fifth phase of the period (2012-2013) the data showed that the trend of property crime in Sandakan increased again by 118 cases or 17.6 percent. A study on the pattern of property crime in Lahad Datu, found that property crime has increased over the period (2005-2009) with an increase of 322 cases or 155.5 percent. For the next four years (2010-2013) property crime in Lahad Datu has decreased by 140 cases or 27.0 percent. The next section explains in detail the commission of property crime in hotspot areas in Sabah, namely in Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan, Tawau, Lahad Datu and Penampang. This research study was conducted using a questionnaire instrument involving a total of 1379 respondents in five hotspot districts. In this section, the discussion focuses on the perception of the frequency of property crime in Sabah.

**(iii) Perception of the Frequency of Property Crimes in Sabah**

The first part in the pattern of crime first highlights the frequency of crime in Sabah to see a clearer picture of the pattern of crime. The frequency of property crime in Sabah is examined by location. The data are described further in Table 1.

Table 1: Perception of Frequency of Property Crime in Sabah

Perception	Total	Percent (%)
Not often	622	50.3
Often	615	49.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1237</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Study, 2015

Number of Respondents: 1237 people

Number of Respondents who did not answer: 263 people\*

The results of the study found that a large number of respondents stated that property crime does not occur frequently in Sabah with a total of 622 respondents or 50.3 percent compared to those who stated frequently which is 615 people or 49.7 percent. To enable the study on the frequency of property crime to be examined in more depth, this section also highlights the level of respondents' perception on the frequency of property crime in Sabah by location as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Perception of Frequency of Property Crime in Sabah by Location

Location	Perception				Total
	Often		Not Often		
	Bil	(%)	Bil	(%)	
Tawau	187	30.4	94	15.1	<b>281(22.7%)</b>
Lahad Datu	140	22.7	51	8.1	<b>191(15.4%)</b>
Penampang	133	21.6	128	20.5	<b>261(21.0%)</b>
Kota Kinabalu	108	17.5	129	20.7	<b>237(19.1%)</b>
Sandakan	47	7.6	220	35.3	<b>267(21.5%)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b> <b>(49.7%)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>622</b> <b>(50.2%)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>1237</b> <b>(100%)</b>

Source: Field Study, 2015

Number of Respondents: 1379 people

Number of Respondents who did not answer: 142 people\*

Instruction:

Location	Kota Kinabalu	Penampang	Sandakan	Lahad Datu	Tawau
Responden	300 people	300 people	273 people	212 people	294 people

Based on Table 2, the perception of the frequency of property crime in Sabah involving respondents in Lahad Datu district is low, while a large number of respondents in Tawau stated that property crime is frequent and only 94 or 15.1 percent stated infrequent. In Lahad Datu, the majority of respondents in the area stated that property crime was frequent, namely 140 respondents or 22.7 percent and 51 respondents or 8.1 percent stated that it was not frequent. In the context of Penampang, a total of 133 (21.6) percent stated that crime occurs frequently compared to those who stated infrequently which is 128 (20.5) percent. In Kota Kinabalu, 108 (17.5) percent stated that property crime is frequent and 129 (20.7) percent stated that it is not frequent as in Sandakan, while a large number of respondents stated that property crime is not frequent, which is 220 (35.3) percent. From these findings, it is clear that most respondents in Tawau, Lahad Datu and Penampang stated that property crime is more frequent than in Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan. by location is different.

From these findings, it can be concluded that property crime is a more dominant crime in Sabah because it brings more profit to the perpetrators. Based on the Sabah Contingent PDRM Report (2014), property crime in Sabah occurred at 81.2 percent while violent crime amounted to 18.8 percent in the 24 years from (1990-2013). This coincides with the findings of field data that 83.2 percent of respondents in Sabah stated that property crime occurs more often than violent crime which is 10.9 percent.

### Conclusion

Based on the discussion on the results of the research study on crime in five hotspot districts in Sabah shows that property crime is more dominant in Sabah than violent crime. The analysis of crime trends in Sabah between 1990 to 2013 also shows that the rate of increase in crime shows a declining pattern. This is due to the crime prevention actions implemented by the PDRM through various initiatives and implementation programs. The crime rate in the

country can also be reduced if cooperation between PDRM and the community can be strengthened from the grassroots level to help crime in hotspot districts in Sabah can be controlled so that the affected areas can be removed from hotspot areas as controlled crime areas by the era of National Transformation. 2050.

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**Selamat di Kawasan Hotspot Jenayah di Sabah”**

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