

Local fishermen up in arms over brazen intrusion, loss of livelihood

KUALA LUMPUR: The blatant intrusion of Vietnamese trawlers off Peninsular Malaysia's east coast has drawn the ire of local fishermen.

Tens of thousands of local fishermen have urged the Agriculture and Agro-based Ministry and other agencies to take remedial measures.

Speaking on their behalf, Dungun Fishermen's Association board of directors representative Bahiyuddin Awang Harun urged the authorities to intervene.

"Our livelihood and that of our families has been severely affected by these indiscriminate ac-

tions of Vietnamese fishermen.

"They seem to have a free hand to blatantly intrude into Malaysian waters and wantonly poach our fish.

"Not only are we affected, but the country is also suffering a huge loss, not to mention the horrendous damage to the biodiversity, seabed and marine life in our country," said Bahiyuddin, who recently organised a protest at Dataran Shahbandar jetty in Kuala Terengganu.

He added that the local fishermen were wondering how the Vietnamese fishermen were able to get permits issued by the Agri-

culture and Agro-based Industry Ministry for the last 15 years to catch fish in Malaysian waters. The NST learnt that a Malaysian syndicate was allegedly renting out the permits to the fishermen.

"There are at least 100 Vietnamese trawlers actively fishing in our waters unchallenged. They are able to reap huge profits by netting premium fish that fetch high prices when sold back home."

Owing to their success stories, more Vietnamese fishermen are becoming bolder about venturing into our waters and depleting the supply of fish here, he added.

