

Panel finds Paween threats claims false

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SONGKHLA: No threats were made against officers handling human trafficking cases, despite claims to the contrary by former probe head Paween Pongsirin, deputy police chief Srivara Ransibrahmanakul says.

He was speaking after he met investigators dealing with Rohingya trafficking cases. He also gave an update on steps to deal with the human trafficking problem in the South at Immigration Division 6 in Hat Yai district of Songkhla.

He said officers have looked into Pol Maj Gen Paween's claims that he received death threats while heading a trafficking probe. They checked with other police investigating the scandal but found no one had reported any influential groups coercing or threatening them, he said.

Pol Maj Gen Paween, who earlier led investigations into human trafficking cases, flew to Melbourne, Australia, early this month where he told local media outlets he was fleeing a death threat made by influential figures in the military and police involved in the human trade case

he previously handled. Last month, Pol Maj Gen Paween quit as deputy chief of Provincial Police Region 8, which oversees the upper southern provinces, after he was transferred to the restive far South over his objections.

He claimed the force's decision to transfer him to the region, where networks of human traffickers, including influential security officers, were arrested in his probe, showed some senior official figures wanted him dead.

He said people involved in trafficking would seek retribution for the progress he made. At least 153 suspects were arrested and 91 of them indicted in the case. An army lieutenant general, police officers, local politicians and business operators are among the

arrested suspects. Meanwhile, Pol Maj Gen Nitipong Neamnoi, commander of Immigration Division 6, said 1,525 people have been arrested for breaching immigration laws in the 14 southern provinces since Saturday. Two Myanmar nationals have also been nabbed for allegedly luring 500 compatriots into working on fishing trawlers in Indonesian waters, he said.



Paween: Fled nation after 'death threats'