



## Singapore offers reward in hunt for alleged militant

Singapore (ANTARA News) - Singapore on Monday offered a reward of one million dollars (740,000 US) for information leading to the recapture of an alleged extremist leader whose escape in February stunned the city-state.

The bounty on Mas Selamat Kastari, who fled a detention centre through a toilet window on February 27, will be paid whether he is found here or abroad, Deputy Prime Minister Wong Kan Seng told parliament.

Wong, who is also in charge of internal security in the city-state, said two businessmen had approached the ministry to offer the million-dollar cash reward for the Singaporean fugitive, and sought anonymity for fear of reprisal.

"We are encouraged by such continued public support. We remain committed to finding and capturing Mas Selamat no matter how long it takes. We have done it before," Wong told AFP.

Kastari is accused of being the Singapore leader of the Southeast Asian extremist group Jemaah Islamiyah (JI). He was being held without trial when he escaped after asking for a toilet break during a family visit.

Authorities blame JI for a string of attacks across the region, including the 2002 bombings on the Indonesian resort island of Bali which killed 202 people.

Two other donors had earlier offered a total of 55,000 dollars in cash rewards for information leading to Kastari's capture, Singapore's Straits Times newspaper said on its website.

Local terrorism research analyst John Harrison said the million-dollar bounty "may be the final incentive necessary to get someone to provide the information on his whereabouts."

"They might be more willing to provide the information," said Harrison, an assistant professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

Singapore officials insist there is no proof Kastari has left the city-state.

But others believe he may already be in neighbouring Indonesia, a sprawling archipelago where he was first captured before being handed over to Singapore. (\*)

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