



**FP joins hunt for drug mastermind - Bali Bust - Sydney Morning Herald, The (Australia) - July 7, 2022 - page 19**  
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Singapore: The Australian Federal Police will join the hunt for a mystery Australian man wanted over the seizure of more than 50 kilograms of drugs in Bali, the island's chief investigator said.

Bali police officers arrested three Indonesian men at a villa in Kuta in April following the discovery of a huge haul of illegal substances including 32kg of cocaine, 35kg of crystal methamphetamine, 2.5kg of marijuana and 796 ecstasy pills.

They believe a 32-year-old Australian man is behind the haul and on Sunday met with AFP officers on the Indonesian holiday mecca.

"AFP said they would help look for him," Bali police's head of drug investigations Mohamad Khozin said. "The AFP came down here [on Sunday] and they offered co-operation. If they can capture him there [in Australia] they will inform us."

Khozin said police suspected the Australian man - who they have identified only as "A" - was attempting to smuggle the drugs into Australia from Bali and had them temporarily at the villa with his other belongings when police raided the premises.

The arrested men were the villa owner and two staff members, according to police. They remain in custody accused of working with the Australian man.

Bali police have since reported the case to Interpol and now brought in Australian investigators, Khozin said, satisfied that their suspect is no longer in Indonesia. "If he was still here I would have caught him," he said.

The AFP itself is tight-lipped on the case. Asked to confirm its involvement and whether it knew the identity of the man Indonesian authorities were chasing, an AFP spokesperson said: "The AFP does not comment on who may or may not be the subject of investigation."

Even if captured in Australia, "A" would almost certainly not be surrendered to police in Indonesia, where the death penalty is applied to serious drug trafficking crimes.

The AFP faced years of fierce scrutiny for sharing information with Indonesian authorities about the **Bali Nine** heroin smuggling operation in 2005. It led to the executions of Australian ringleaders Andrew Chan and Myuran Sukumaran in 2015.

Australian legislation forbids the extradition of a fugitive to a nation where they could face the death penalty. It was under those laws that the Australian government would not extradite Malaysian hitman Sirul Azhar Umar, a former bodyguard for Malaysian ex-prime minister Najib Razak, who was sentenced to death in absentia in 2015 over the 2006 murder of model Altantuyaa Shaariibuu. Sirul had fled Malaysia while on bail in 2014 and has been held in detention in Sydney for seven years.

"The crime scene is here," Khozin said of the Bali case. "However, it is subject to the leadership's policy whether the case is handled there [in Australia]."

Police in Bali received a tip-off in November that 50kg of drugs would soon arrive on the island. They believe the Australian man had stashed them at the villa since January.

The drugs, which had an estimated local street value of 56 billion rupiah (\$5.43 million), were burnt at a press conference held in Bali last month.

"Destruction is carried out to reduce the risk of the possibility of changing the evidence or the loss of evidence and or misuse of it," Khozin said. "Drugs must be destroyed to protect the public from the dangers of narcotics."

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