

Zahid doubts '11pct M'sians sympathise with IS' finding

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Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi today expressed doubt over a survey which found that 11 percent of Malaysians are Islamic State (IS) sympathisers.

Although Zahid said he did not want to question the survey – which was conducted by the Pew Research Centre – the Home Minister believed that the survey may not have been conducted empirically and was probably instead conducted randomly.

“And the survey was maybe conducted using either the qualitative or quantitative method.

“But to summarise that 3.3 million Malaysians are sympathisers to atrocities done by the IS, is a conclusion that cannot be wholly accepted,” he said in a press conference after the international conference on deradicalisation and countering violent extremism in Kuala Lumpur today.

Adding that he did not wish to determine the research methodology utilised by the research centre, Zahid stressed that it was more important how the government is not only committed to curb terrorism but is also playing a role at the international level.

According to the survey which was released in November last year, Malaysia was tied at second place with Senegal among 11 nations polled.

Meanwhile, Zahid was also asked why there were no representatives from the Shiite community at the international conference.

The deputy prime minister however replied that there are no differences between the Sunni and the Shiite.

“To us, there are no differences between any sects in Islam. What’s important is that we put aside any differences.

“We are facing one enemy, that is, those involved in terrorism. This should be the priority,” he stressed.

This is why, said Zahid, the international conference was conducted to find a common ground to tackle the problem at hand.

“There is no religion, what more any sect, that agrees in any form of violence,” he said.

Malaysia has been placed on the highest alert level following the terrorist attack in Jakarta two weeks ago.

And in raids across the country since August last year, more than 20 people have been arrested over suspected links with IS.

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