

'Very wise' Zakir doesn't mean to promote terror, says Zahid

MalaysiaKini.com

Apr 14th, 2016

Alyaa Azhar

Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi does not believe that controversial Muslim preacher Zakir Naik promotes terrorism.

"He doesn't mean that, he doesn't mean to promote terrorism," he told a press conference in Kuala Lumpur today.

Zahid, who is also home minister, was responding to various claims that the Indian national promoted terrorism in his lectures.

However, the deputy prime minister said he has monitored the preacher's speeches in other countries including those in India as well as the reason for him being barred from the United Kingdom.

On Zakir being conferred the Ma'al Hijrah Distinguished Personality award by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong in 2013, Zahid said it was given based on his contributions.

"It's just that he is seen as though as he had questioned other religions," he added.

Zahid confirmed that the police are still monitoring the televangelist and noted that the organisers were told to change the topic of a lecture that was deemed provocative.

"But we believe he is a very wise man. Tomorrow he's going to see me, so I will discuss with him," he said, adding that it was a courtesy call.

Out of context

Among others, Zakir had allegedly expressed support for al-Qaeda founder Osama Laden. He was then banned from entering the UK, Canada and Singapore because of this perceived hardline stand.

However, in 2010, he reportedly said that his quote was taken out of context.

Inspector-general of police Khalid Abu Bakar's move to ban Zakir's event in Malacca ignited a heated debate and drew mixed responses, with those opposed to the scholar expressing gratitude, while numerous Muslim groups expressed disappointment.

MIC as well as NGOs had protested Zakir's lecture series in Malaysia, claiming that the Indian national had a tendency to insult other religions.

However, Umno Youth as well as Parti Amanah Negara (Amanah) and PAS were among

those who decried the move to ban the lecture.

Zahid then allowed for the event in Malacca to proceed with the condition that the topic of the lecture be changed.

Police have also agreed to allow Zakir's lecture in Kuala Lumpur to proceed this Saturday, although subject to certain conditions.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/337812>