

Zahid: 200 Syrian immigrants due to arrive in M'sia this year
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Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said 300 Syrian immigrants are due to arrive in Malaysia this year.

He said this was part of Malaysia's voluntary commitment to accept 3,000 Syrian immigrants in three years on humanitarian grounds.

He said 100 Syrian immigrants from 24 families from the Bekaa Valley refugee camp in Lebanon would be brought to Malaysia and are due to arrive on three special flights at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Base at 10am on May 28.

He said five officers from the Home Ministry, Immigration Department and police force would depart for Beirut this week to carry out the security and health screening process before bringing the Syrian immigrants into Malaysia.

"We will bring in those with clean records. They will be placed at a temporary housing in Setia Alam, Shah Alam," he said.

He was speaking at a media conference after receiving a courtesy visit from Lebanon's Ambassador to Malaysia, Ali Daher and the launch of the Syria Immigrant Humanitarian Fund at his office in Putrajaya today.

Last October, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak announced at the 70th United Nations Assembly that Malaysia would open its doors to 3,000 Syrian refugees in three years to help in the refugee crisis.

Last year, the first group of Syrian immigrants comprising eight people with family members living in Malaysia arrived in December.

Ahmad Zahid said with the screening process, the authorities could determine if these immigrants were from the professional group or were students.

"Syrian immigrants will not be given Malaysian passports but emergency travel documents as they do not have international passports. The professional group will be given work visas while students will get student visas," he said.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Zahid urged Malaysians to donate in the form of money or kind to the Syrian immigrants.

“I have also written to several organisations for them to supply money, furniture and home appliances to help the Syrian immigrants who are temporarily staying here,” he said.

Ahmad Zahid also launched the Syria Immigrant Humanitarian Fund with the collaboration of nine non-governmental organisations, namely Humanitarian Care Malaysia (MyCare), Syria Care Malaysia, Malaysian Humanitarian Aid and Relief (Mahar), Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (Abim), Imam Response and Relief Team (Imaret), Muslim Care, Pertubuhan Sinar Damsyik Malaysia (Persidam), Malaysia Life Line For Syria and Yayasan Restu.

This coalition of NGOs will manage the education, health and welfare of Syrian immigrants who are in the Syria Migrant Temporary Placement Programme.

- *Bernama*

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