

Zahid reminds of divine punishment for those who leak gov't secrets

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In the spirit of Ramadan, Deputy Prime Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has offered some advice for fellow civil servants.

During a breaking of fast event at his official residence in Putrajaya today, Zahid reminded civil servants that divine punishment awaits those who leak government secrets.

He, however, told them that there were laws to ensure that they do not do so.

“... If there are those among us who want to leak or share secrets, then there are laws (to curb this), like the Official Secrets Act (OSA), but this is just a piece of legislation.

“Just like with fasting, there are laws, but the enforcement comes from ourselves,” said the deputy premier, who was nursing a sore throat.

Zahid said laws only acted as a guide and people would not need laws if they practised “self-enforcement”.

He added that Muslims invoked the name of Allah when they took oaths.

“We use the name of Allah and if we go against it, it is feared that it will become a sumpah laknat (religious oath) and Allah will curse us.

“So before the curse comes from Allah, I want to remind my own self and all civil servants to keep (government) secrets because we took oaths to safeguard them,” he added.

The home minister was, however, quick to deny that this was a warning.

“This is not a warning. I just want to remind myself and everyone here because this is the spirit of Ramadan and we must appreciate it so that all the goodness will continue,” he said.

There have been 31 cases of government secret leaks from 2010 to 2015; however, only four out of 15 people investigated under the OSA have been charged in court.

Earlier this year, the OSA became a hot topic after attorney-general Mohamed Apandi Ali said he had plans to strengthen the act.

Apandi had wanted those who leak government secrets and the journalists who protect the source of such leaks, to be sentenced to life imprisonment and 10 strokes of the cane.

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