

Let's stand united against terrorists, Zahid tells UN
MalaysiaKini.com
Sept 24th, 2016
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Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has issued a clarion call for the world to unite in the fight against terror that he said has brought about instability and insecurity of nations.

The message that the Malaysian deputy prime minister conveyed in a speech at the United Nations today was crystal clear - only if and when the international community stands united can the terrorists be defeated.

"Malaysia joins others in calling for robust and effective international actions in our collective fight against terrorism. Such efforts must be based on and in full respect of the UN Charter and universally recognised principles of law, including international humanitarian and human rights laws," he said.

Ahmad Zahid was speaking at the General Debate of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly, where he joined leaders from all over the globe.

Terrorism, he said, had to be tackled from the ideological perspective - by countering the narratives and addressing the root causes of issues that could be manipulated to attract people into supporting terror groups like Islamic State (IS), Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab.

"We need to explore new solutions and continuously work to enhance our domestic legal framework in the fight against violent extremism. These continuous efforts should involve a diverse cross-section of our population," he said.

He also shone the spotlight on Malaysia's deradicalisation and rehabilitation programmes towards changing the mindsets of radicalised extremist individuals.

With a success rate of around 97.5 percent, he said, Malaysia was ready to share its experience with other nations.

The issue of lengthy delays in the resettlement of refugees causing hardships to host countries - Malaysia included - was also mentioned by Ahmad Zahid who urged the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other relevant agencies to promptly act on the matter.

On migrants, he said Malaysia recognised the contribution of the foreign work force to the country's economic prosperity and had given serious attention to cases involving labour exploitation including forced labour.

Turning to Palestine, Ahmad Zahid said the decades-long crisis highlighted the built-in flaws in the workings of the UN where the use of the veto continued to perpetuate the longest occupation in modern history.

The deputy prime minister painted a grim picture whereby the situation on the ground in the Occupied Palestinian Territory was slowly but surely moving away from a two-state solution.

"The blockade on Gaza, the unrelenting expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, the continued construction of the illegal walls, the forced transfer of Palestinians from their homes and gross violations of human rights of Palestinians continue unabated despite mounting international pressure and criticism," he said.

Malaysia is people-centred

Closer to home, he said Malaysia's development agenda had always been people-centred, which ran parallel to the aspirations of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

He said Malaysia was in the process of formulating a National SDG Roadmap to serve as an overarching and guiding policy for the country's sustainable development.

He touched on the salient points of the 11th Malaysia Plan (2016-2020), skills development under Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) initiatives and the Malaysian Global Innovation and Creative Centre (MaGIC) to make Malaysia the startup capital of Asia.

Located in Cyberjaya, MaGIC was jointly launched by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak in April 2014.

Ahmad Zahid also highlighted Malaysia's National Blue Ocean Strategy or NBOS initiative that allows over 80 ministries and agencies to collaborate for better public service delivery.

- *Bernama*

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Source: <http://www.malysiakini.com/news/356857>