

'Anwar, Prayuth expected to engage in talks for peace in Southern Thailand'

Malaysiakini

09 February 2023

Bernama

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim is expected to revive a decade-long peace negotiation in Southern Thailand today, during a four-eyed meeting with Thailand Prime Minister Prayuth Chan o-cha.

Anwar, who will be on his maiden two-day official visit to Thailand, starting today, is expected to seek an avenue to expedite the peace process to ensure peace in Southern Thailand through a dialogue.

“We will leave the matter to be discussed by the two leaders during their meeting.

“While discussing bilateral matters, both leaders will most certainly discuss issues that will benefit both parties,” Foreign Minister Zambry Abd Kadir said at a press conference yesterday, held in conjunction with the Prime Minister’s official visit to Thailand.

Zambry said this when asked if Anwar would provide hope to resolve the long-standing conflict in Southern Thailand.

Malaysia has been the facilitator for the peace process that is aimed at resolving a decade-long conflict that escalated in January 2004 at Southern Narathiwat, Yala, Pattani and parts of Songkhla.

Former armed forces general Zulkifli Zainal Abidin was appointed, effective Jan 1, as the Malaysian government's chief facilitator in the dialogue for a truce in Southern Thailand.

Discussions were held between the government and insurgents since 2013, but the talks came to a grinding halt when the army took control in Thailand a year later.

Talks resumed without the involvement of the main parties, including Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN).

General Wanlop Rugsanoah headed the panel for peace dialogue in the southernmost provinces in Thailand (PEDP).

Statistics based on the independent group, Deep South Watch, revealed that

conflicts and violence in Southern Thailand that started in Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Songkhla, have left more than 7,000 people dead.

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Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/654414>