

Pay rise on the cards for armed forces personnel
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The Defence Ministry has discussed with the Public Services Department salary adjustments for the armed forces.

Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, said he had himself met PSD director-general Abu Bakar Abdullah to discuss detailed adjustments to the salary.

He said the salary should rank-by-rank be at least on par with that of the police force.

"But, if we are to go by the constitution, the salary scheme for the armed forces should be above that of all other services," he told reporters here after launching the Territorial Army Company for Besut, Setiu, Dungun and Kemaman.

"This is the basis (for the adjustments) that I hold on to although some quarters argue that there should not be a salary increase because there is no war and soldiers have a lot of rest," he said.

"So, must there be a war for their salary to be increased?"

Key role in war and peace

Zahir said the armed forces had an important role in war and peace, when they give humanitarian aid and relief to disaster victims.

They have also done peace keeping duties under the United Nations, he added.

From next year, Zahid said, the armed forces will carry out a "noble soul" programme to help people in interior areas throughout the country.

He said that they would be involved in building of infrastructure and repairing the houses of poor people.

"The cabinet has given guidelines for the armed forces to help in Orang Asli-inhabited areas and where contractors have difficulty to bring in building materials," he added.

Zahid said the armed forces had the transport vehicles and equipment to be effective at such locations.

- Bernama

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