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Malaysia aims for Tier 1

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DPM: Govt vows to do more in fight against human trafficking

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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia, which aims to be on Tier 1 in the US State Department's Trafficking in Persons Report by 2020, has come up with a "to do" list which includes providing more help to human-trafficking victims and prosecuting traffickers.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the Government's efforts to address human trafficking so far had paid off when Malaysia was upgraded to Tier 2 in the report this year.

"We have done significant work to tackle human trafficking and will do a lot more to check the traffickers. As for making it to Tier 1, we hope this can be achieved.

"It will take some time and that is why we have set the target to 2020.

"There is a lot of work to be done as we need to fulfil the criteria and follow the check-list set by the United States," he told pressmen after chairing a high-level committee meeting of the Council for Anti-Trafficking in Persons.

The US State Department, he said, would be doing an evaluation of Malaysia's performance on anti-human trafficking in March.

Dr Ahmad Zahid said the Government planned to beef up protection and offer other forms of assistance to the victims with the help of agencies and NGOs.

He cited the example where 30 victims, with the help of the US embassy, would be given employment at a hotel while the ministries of Women, Family and Community Development, and Youth and



Good work: Dr Ahmad Zahid presenting a certificate of appreciation to JW Marriott hotel manager Mahmoud Skaf as Yun (left) looks on during the high-level committee meeting on human trafficking in Putrajaya.

Sports were providing counselling to them.

"I hope other employers will take the cue from JW Marriott Hotel to provide work for these victims. I would like to thank Ambassador Joseph Yun and the management of the hotel," he said.

There are 2,217 victims of human trafficking, who are given protection by the authorities, and are eligible for employment.

He said the Government was also working towards ensuring that those responsible for trafficking the Rohingya and Bangladeshis be prosecuted in Malaysia.

This was to counter claims that the Government had not done enough to investigate, arrest and prosecute those involved, he added.

"The Malaysian and Thai police are hot on the trail of the human traffickers," he said.

He said the traffickers, following 67 investigations carried out by Malaysian and Thai police, were found to be Thais and Myanmar nationals.

No Malaysians were involved in this syndicate, he added.

In May, mass graves and detention camps for Rohingya and Bangladeshis - victims of human-trafficking syndicates - were found in Wang Kelian, Perlis.