

'Police have evidence to justify deportation of Turkish national'

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said police have sufficient evidence to justify their action in deporting a Turkish national and his family to Turkey.

"The action is being taken by the police, who have their own reasons why they (the Turkish nationals) should not be in the country," he said.

It was reported that the Turkish national, who is a school teacher, together with his wife and children, would be deported following accusations that the man had been categorised by Ankara as

being part of a terrorist movement.

The man and his family had been granted protection by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees about two months ago.

Dr Mahathir, however, could not confirm reports on whether the man and his family had been deported or were still being detained at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

Asked why the Malaysian authorities did not provide the same treatment to the Turkish national as that accorded to con-

troversial Muslim preacher Dr Zakir Naik, Dr Mahathir said it was improper to draw a parallel of the two cases.

"We treat cases according to their basis. On Zakir Naik, can you tell me where we should send him?"

"If you can find a place (to deport him), please tell me."

On concerns that the Turkish national and his family could be tortured or "disappear" after they had been deported to Turkey, Dr Mahathir replied: "I do not know whether he had made a speech or not.

"There is no report in the press about him making a speech or stirring hatred and all that.

"I do not know about Turkey torturing people. Are we going to accuse Turkey of torturing people?"

Turkey's Anadolu Agency, quoting security sources, said Turkish intelligence had arrested the man, who was labelled as the Malaysia chief of the Fetullah Terrorist Organisation (Feto), in an operation and brought him back to Turkey.

The Turkish National Intelligence Organisation detained the man, who had allegedly held se-

nior positions in the group in different countries.

The report said he was wanted by Turkey on charges of being a member of an armed terrorist organisation.

Feto and its US-based leader, Fetullah Gulen, reportedly orchestrated the failed coup of July 15, 2016, which left 251 people dead and nearly 2,200 injured.

Ankara also accuses Feto of being behind a long-running campaign to overthrow the state through the infiltration of Turkish institutions, particularly the military, police and judiciary.