

**POTA Law To Address Threat From Terror Groups - Ahmad Zahid
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KOTA BAHARU, March 5 (Bernama) -- The proposed Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) is a law specifically to address the threat from terror groups such as the IS militants, said Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

A bill is to be tabled in the Dewan Rakyat this month to provide for the legislation. The Dewan Rakyat sits for 20 days from Monday.

Ahmad Zahid said the new legislation was a preventive law aimed at anticipating and preventing terror activities and acting against IS members from Malaysia and other nations who come to this country.

"This month, I will table the Prevention of Terrorism Bill in the Dewan Rakyat. Yesterday, the Cabinet was briefed on the draft by the Attorney-General. The draft will be finalised next week," he told reporters after an appreciation reception for personnel of the Department of Civil Defence (JPAM) who were involved in flood relief work.

Ahmad Zahid was asked to comment on the involvement of Malaysians in the IS militant group as well as the latest report of two Malaysians, one from Kedah and the other from Melaka, seen in a video clip showing the beheading of Syrian nationals in the strife-torn country.

Ahmad Zahid said POTA would strengthen existing laws such as the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (SOSMA) and the Prevention of Crime Act (POCA) though SOSMA and POCA were not specifically for prevention of terrorism.

On the video clip, he said the authenticity of the clip was being verified.

"I could see that they were Malay faces but the police anti-terrorism unit, with the cooperation of Interpol, is getting the clip verified.

"Action will be taken, not just confined to existing laws such as POCA, SOSMA and the Penal Code," he said.

Ahmad Zahid said POTA would have provision for the detention of suspects for two years, and the detention period could be extended.

The minister said all quarters should support the new law to address terrorism, including MPs when the bill came up for debate in the Dewan Rakyat.

On another matter, Ahmad Zahid said JPAM, which had over 800,000 permanent and volunteer personnel nationwide, was ready to face natural disasters including floods.

JPAM was targeting up to one million permanent and volunteer personnel over the next two years, and it would acquire more equipment and machinery to make their work more effective, he said.

Ahmad Zahid praised the JPAM personnel for their flood relief and post-flood work.

He also launched 12 high-powered motorcycles for the Kelantan Anti-Smuggling Unit.

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