

**Asean Needs To Step Up Intelligence, Security Cooperation To Combat IS - Anifah
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PUTRAJAYA, March 9 (Bernama) -- It is critical that ASEAN and the international community recognise the so-called Islamic State (IS) as a lethal danger and step up efforts to strengthen intelligence and security cooperation, says Malaysia's Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman.

He said the movement was far more dangerous than any terrorist organisation the world had ever faced, unlike the Al-Qaeda, which for all the danger it represented, was still a marginal movement.

Anifah, in sounding the alarm, said: "News of the involvement of the citizens of more than 80 countries in the so-called Islamic State movement, including countries in our region, means that the risk of it spreading its evil tentacles to our part of the neighbourhood is very real indeed.

"We must step up our efforts to nip this problem in the bud by strengthening our intelligence and security cooperation."

Anifah said this in his luncheon talk on "ASEAN Political-Security Community (APSC)" at the International Conference on 'The New World Order - A Recipe For War or Peace', and launching of the book titled "Abolishing War", authored by Prof Johan Galtung.

The one-day international conference was organised by Perdana Global Peace Foundation.

Anifah said the so-called Islamic State had all the resources of an organised state.

"But much more importantly, they are now seen by many potential recruits as a 'winning team'."

Anifah said all parties must be mindful that terrorism and extremism must be addressed in a comprehensive manner, and not through the use of force alone.

"Malaysia stands ready to share its experience in marginalising extremism; maintaining a multi-religious country, where different faiths coexist and prosper.

"We can show that Islam can not only succeed, but drive progress and development in a pluralistic society. It is vital that we spread the real understanding of Islam," he said.

As a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Anifah said Malaysia would continue to promote the moderation agenda and mediation approach towards peaceful conflict resolution, and contribute towards the enhancement of UN peacekeeping operations.

He said Malaysia firmly believed that ASEAN would continue to be the fulcrum of peace, stability and prosperity in the region as ASEAN moved towards greater integration and becoming a community with a shared vision and destiny.

"A strong and robust ASEAN community would not only ensure the wellbeing of its people, but would also have a place and significant role to play in promoting and maintaining global peace and prosperity," he added.

On Malaysia being the chairman of ASEAN this year, Anifah said a strong and successful ASEAN was not only an economic necessity but also a strategic imperative.

"A prosperous, consolidated and stable ASEAN is a security deposit for Southeast Asia and Asia at large," he said.

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