

ASEAN To Emulate Malaysia's Success Of Deradicalisation As New Framework's Benchmark – DPM

Bernama

Oct 2, 2015

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 2 (Bernama) -- Malaysia's remarkable success in rehabilitating and deradicalising detainees of terrorism will be used as a benchmark for the preparation of the ASEAN's standard operating procedure (SOP) on the issue.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the matter would be discussed in a deradicalisation conference hosted by Malaysia in January next year.

"Malaysia will host the deradicalisation conference on Jan 25 and 26 next year with participation from the ten-member ASEAN plus eight other countries.

"...this (conference) includes the presentation of eight working papers on rehabilitation aspects, including rehabilitation using psychological approach, as well as on engagement of those arrested for involvement in terrorism activities."

He said this at a press conference after chairing the Special ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Rise of Radicalisation and Violent Extremism (SAMMRRAVE) here Friday.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Home Minister, said Malaysia had a wide-range of experiences on dealing with radicalisation and terrorism, including the communist insurgency, and the expertise gained from the rehabilitation programmes could be used as a template for not only ASEAN, but also globally.

He said based on the data provided by the Prisons Department, the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (Jakim), and also from the ministry's Public Order and Security Division, the effectiveness of Malaysia's rehabilitation programmes were outstanding considering that the rate of those who were fully recovered was 95 per cent.

"Only five per cent are in need of follow ups, probably because they are among the hardcore group who require not only psychological approach, but other suitable and individual approach," he said.

On the output of the closed-door SAMMRRAVE meeting, Ahmad Zahid said all 10 members of ASEAN had shared their respective experiences on dealing with the matter and also their commitment to tackle the issue.

He also noted that the movement and the influence of the so-called IS militant group in this region had been intensively-discussed by the delegates.

The deputy prime minister said ASEAN members had also agreed that the ideology of the militant group should be seen as a real threat to the people in this region, hence the need to contain and prevent it from spreading.

"This is because if (the curb on IS was) not done, we are afraid that Islamophobia will continue to haunt the West and the mindset of those who do not understand the true Islamic teachings.

"Long term efforts must be taken by the international community, not only to curb, but eventually to eradicate extremism," he said.

On Malaysia's part, Ahmad Zahid said the number of those involved had decreased with the aggressive preventive measures and continuous monitoring activity carried out by the police, and that he hoped Malaysia could achieve the 'zero-terrorist' goal as the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) 2015 took place.

On the four-day biennial ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC), which ended yesterday, Ahmad Zahid applauded the commitment showed by each member of the ASEAN to contain the issue.

He said, all members had not only agreed to initiate the process of information and also intelligence-sharing, but also to provide funds to help the victims of the human trafficking.

Ahmad Zahid said Malaysia earlier had pledged US\$250,000 to the ASEAN humanitarian trust fund to help the victims of human trafficking, and Singapore agreed to donate US\$100,000, while the other countries had promised no less than US\$50,000.

"This will be used to help victims of human trafficking and to enable rehabilitation efforts, medical aid and basic facilities to be provided to them," he said further.

On another note, Ahmad Zahid said he, on behalf of the ASEAN secretariat, was feeling grateful for the coverage by Malaysia's and international media and also on the commitment on highlighting the importance of this year's ASEAN meeting.

"Extraordinary coverage was given to this year's meetings and this shows that the media, both local and international, had displayed a very high concern on efforts taken by ASEAN member countries in several issues...

"...especially in implementing the massive awareness campaign to curb terrorism activities, which had become a non-conventional threat to the region," he added.

The four-day AMMTC ended yesterday, in which the highlight was the signing of the Kuala Lumpur Declaration in Combating Transnational Crime, while the SAMMRRAVE concluded today with the intelligent and experience-sharing among the ASEAN members.

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