

**Haze: Malaysia Will Not Put Any Pressure On Indonesia – DPM
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KUALA LUMPUR, (Oct 22) (Bernama) -- Malaysia will not put any form of pressure on Indonesia to tackle the cross-border haze menace originating from the republic.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said such a move would be unfair to Indonesia which was earnestly undertaking efforts to put out the fires on its peat land.

"It's unfair to put any pressure on Indonesia. President Joko Widodo has shown strong commitment to solving the problem in the long term," he told reporters after opening the first Putrajaya International Security Dialogue, here, Thursday.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Home Minister, urged all parties affected by the haze problem to stop pointing the blame finger at each other.

Instead, he said, all ASEAN countries should be cooperating to assist Indonesia find long-term solutions to the haze problem.

"We should also sympathise with Indonesia in overcoming this problem. Don't just criticise them.

"At the same time, I hope there are no parties blaming Malaysian investors opening up land for oil palm plantations there for the fires," he added.

Ahmad Zahid said Malaysia was prepared to share its best practice in oil palm cultivation with Indonesia in the effort to reduce fires and in overcoming the problem in future.

"Personally, I have proposed to the Indonesia President (Joko Widodo) the best plantation practice by Malaysian operators there," he said.

Citing the system used by TH Plantation in Riau, he explained that in between each two rows of oil palms, a drain had been built to channel water to the plants and to prevent any fire from spreading if it happened.

However, he said, it was up to the Indonesian government to introduce the best oil palm cultivation system as it would incur a high cost, besides requiring the cooperation of plantations and smallholders.

According to the Department of Environment, 97 per cent of peat soil fires were caused by smallholders who were still using the traditional slash-and-burn method in cultivating oil palm.

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