

**Increase Collaboration With Non-Islamic Countries To Tackle Islamophobia – Zahid
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- Malaysia today called on Islamic nations to be proactive in tackling the problem of Islamophobia faced by the world currently.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said at the same time, Islamic nations should increase cooperation with non-Islamic nations to correct the latter's misperception of Islam.

Speaking at a news conference after opening the 1st Putrajaya International Security Dialogue, here, he said non-Islamic nations had the wrong perception of Islam due to the actions of a small number of Muslims.

"The actions of this group of Muslims who wrongly interpret Islamic teachings have tarnished the image of Islam," he said.

Ahmad Zahid said international understanding and collaboration to understand the true teachings of Islam should be given attention in order to end Islamophobia.

He said Malaysia, for instance, had held discussions with China's authorities on overcoming Islamophobia in that country.

He added that Australia had also expressed its intention to learn from Malaysia on the approaches taken to rehabilitate the radicals.

On the national front, the home minister said Malaysia had put in place close operation among enforcement agencies such as the police, Immigration Department, Customs Department and the Islamic Development Department (Jakim) to fight terrorism.

He said the Home Ministry also had a special panel to undertake rehabilitation for those individuals who had been radicalised.

The panel, he added, comprised representatives from the police and Jakim, psychologists and ulama with the task of getting these individuals return to the right faith.

"The panel was set up some time ago and not only after the IS elements began entering this country."

Ahmad Zahid said before this, the Malaysian government had faced an almost similar threat as the IS from radical and militant groups like Al-Maunah and a deviant religious group in Memali, Kedah.

He said the fact that Malaysia was chosen by the United States to set up the Regional Digital Counter-Messaging Communications Centre to fight the violent extremism of IS through

cyberspace, was also a recognition to the work that Malaysia had put in to combat terrorism.

"This is a vital role and trust given to Malaysia.

"I think we are able to translate our commitment by putting in extra effort not only from the police but other enforcement agencies as well to assist the international community combat terrorism," he said.

Earlier in his keynote address, the deputy prime minister called on ASEAN and its regional partners to intensify collaboration in fighting terrorism.

Noting that the world was facing a common enemy in terrorism, Ahmad Zahid said countries must also strengthen their networks to fight the cross-boundary crime.

"We should enhance collaboration, not only to pool our opinions, but also our experience and practices to combat the threat," he said.

About 300 participants comprising security experts and personnel attended the two-day dialogue, held on the sidelines of the 4th General Police and Special Equipment Exhibition and Conference Asia.

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