

Malaysia Aims for Tier One Ranking in US Anti-Human Trafficking Report by 2020 – Zahid Bernama
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PUTRAJAYA, Dec 21 (Bernama) -- Malaysia aims to be placed at Tier One in the United States Department of State Annual Report on Human Trafficking by 2020, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also the Home Minister, said that at present Malaysia was at Tier Two of the watchlist after improving from its Tier 3 position in 2014.

"Malaysia has taken several measures after improving on its position from Tier Three to Tier Two, in preparation for another assessment to be made by the US Department of State in March next year.

"By 2020, we aim to achieve Tier One based on the criteria set by the United States," he told reporters after chairing a meeting of the high-level committee on Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants here today.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, Ministers in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Paul Low Seng Kuan and Nancy Shukri and Attorney General Tan Sri Mohamed Apandi Ali also attended the meeting.

The meeting was also attended by Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar and US Ambassador to Malaysia Joseph Yun.

Ahmad Zahid said Yun was in the meeting to discuss measures and advise on follow-up action to improve on Malaysia's performance, among them to provide employment opportunities for victims of human trafficking.

Currently, he said, there were 2,217 human trafficking victims seeking shelter in Malaysia who were eligible for employment.

"The US ambassador has expressed his commitment to provide jobs for 30 victims and, for a start, four people have been hired by JW Marriott Hotel Kuala Lumpur," he said.

At the meeting, Ahmad Zahid presented a certificate to JW Marriott Hotel Kuala Lumpur in appreciation of the hotel's corporate social responsibility contribution in providing employment to the four victims, three Indonesians and a Laotian.

The four were offered employment on contract for a period of two years beginning Jan 1, 2016.

He said Malaysia was committed to assisting human trafficking victims by improving on

ways to protect them and helping them to start on a new life.

On investigations into the discovery of the mass graves of suspected human trafficking victims in Wang Kelian, Perlis, Ahmad Zahid said six suspects, five Thai citizens and a Myanmar national, had been identified as the masterminds in the case.

However, he said, police were still seeking to arrest them so that they could be prosecuted in Malaysia.

"We have sought the cooperation of the Thai authorities and exchanged information to facilitate investigations and prosecution of those involved in Malaysia," he said.

Last May, the police announced the discovery of mass graves with 106 skeletal remains believed to be those of Rohingya refugees, as well as 28 human trafficking victims' camps. Thai police charged 88 people, including a general, with human trafficking last month.

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