

Malaysia to Use Diplomatic Channel to Bring Back Beheaded Malaysian's Remains – Ahmad Zahid

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PUTRAJAYA, Dec 23 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian government will use the diplomatic channel to bring back the remains of a Malaysian abducted from Sabah and beheaded in southern Philippines, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said efforts were being made to facilitate the family of Bernard Then Ted Fen to claim the remains.

"We want to bring back the remains as soon as possible ... we are organising it," he told reporters after Vice President of Zambia Inonge Mutukwa Wina called on him here today.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar said last Saturday that Philippine authorities confirmed that a DNA test confirmed that a head found on Jolo Island in southern Philippines was Then's.

Then, 39, who hailed from Sarawak, was abducted by a group of armed men from a seafood restaurant in Sandakan, Sabah, on May 14 along with the restaurant manager Thein Nyuk Fun, 50. Thein was released on Nov 8 but Then was beheaded at a remote location in Jolo on Nov 11.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also the Home Minister, said the Cabinet meeting yesterday which he had chaired also discussed matters associated with racial sensitivity in the country.

He said the people should not look at everything that happens along racial lines as it would paint an undesirable picture of the country at a time when efforts were being made to maintain harmony.

He also said that in business, all quarters should avoid doing anything that could cause dissatisfaction between traders and customers.

Ahmad Zahid said the Cabinet meeting also instructed the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry and the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry as well as related agencies to cooperate with the local authorities to step up security in places frequented by people.

He said they should identify areas frequented by domestic tourists during the school holidays so as to help avert undesirable incidents.

"Warnings should be issued about monsoon winds that can pose a danger to people in recreational areas," he said.

On the National Security Council Bill that was approved by the Dewan Negara on Tuesday,

Ahmad Zahid said it was not intended to strengthen the authority of any individual.

He also said that the bill never intended to usurp the authority of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong but was introduced to strengthen national security.

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