

Media Members Free To Do Their Work But Must Respect the Law - Ahmad Zahid
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KUCHING, March 13 (Bernama) -- The government does not obstruct members of the local or foreign media from carrying out their duties but they have to abide by journalism ethics as well as the laws of this country, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

"On behalf of the government and the Home Ministry, I do not hinder any local or foreign journalist from covering any events or interviewing any leaders.

"The journalism profession has its ethics... but when they cross the line we have to ensure our VVIPs should be protected using security measures," he said.

He was speaking at a media conference after chairing a meeting of the Malaysian Crime Prevention Foundation's (MCPF) executive committee here today.

Ahmad Zahid was asked to comment on the detention of two Australians who were arrested for breaking a security cordon while trying to interview Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, here last night.

Also present were Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar and MCPF vice-chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye.

Ahmad Zahid said security personnel give top priority to protect VVIPs and it should not be seen as impeding the freedom of the media.

"The act (keeping security) was to ensure journalism ethics are adhered to...the ethics in Malaysia should be observed and obeyed and the question of security should be given top priority by the authorities and journalists should respect the decision to keep security intact," he said.

"I think if Malaysian journalists were abroad, they should also adhere to journalism ethics as well as the security factors in the country concerned," he said.

Ahmad Zahid said the detention of the two Australians could not be considered as obstructing foreign journalists.

"I think they have done the best for their media. But at the same time, they should respect the aspects of security enforced by the authorities in this country," he said.

When enquired about the action against the two foreigners, Ahmad Zahid said he had left it to police to take further action.

"We hope what is important is respect for the law and observing the rules," he said.

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