

**Zakir Naik a Man of Wisdom does not Promote Violence – Ahmad Zahid
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 14 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has described well-known missionary, Dr Zakir Naik , as a wise man and denies that the Islamic scholar promotes violence.

Ahmad Zahid said his observation on lectures given by Dr Zakir in several countries and the action by Canada and the United Kingdom in denying his entry to the two countries did not show that he promoted violence.

"I have obtained information on all his activities but they did not mean that he promotes violence and so on. We look at the Maal Hijrah Figure award bestowed on him two years ago as recognition for his contribution towards Islam.

"It's just that he appears as though he disputes the other religions. His studies are on the comparison of religions and although he is a medical doctor, he is interested in delivering his knowledge on the Islamic religion," he told reporters after opening the National Key Targets Seminar 2016, here today.

Ahmad Zahid disclosed this when asked to comment on the stand of the government in conferring the Maal Hijrah Figure award to the preacher who is accused of promoting violence.

Ahmad Zahid said Dr Zakir, 50, will make a courtesy call on him tomorrow.

Dr Zakir, who is visiting this country to deliver religious talks, has been accused by several groups of jeopardising public order and touching on the sensitivities of the other faiths.

Last Monday, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar ordered the cancellation of Dr Zakir's forum in Melaka scheduled for this Sunday titled 'Similarities Between Hinduism and Islam', to avoid the event from jeopardising public order and religious sensitivity.

However, one day later Ahmad Zahid issued a statement that the government allowed Dr Zakir to go ahead with his talks at Universiti Teknikal Malaysia (UTeM) Melaka on Sunday, but with a change in the title of the lecture to 'Women's Rights In Islam'.

Last Sunday, Dr Zakir gave a ceramah at the Gong Badak Indoor Stadium in Kuala Nerus, Terengganu which was attended by more than 30,000 people, and on Saturday, he is scheduled to give a talk at the Stadium Hoki Nasional, Bukit Jalil, here.

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