

**Parliament: Parliamentary Caucus on Illegal Gambling To Be Set Up – Zahid  
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 21 (Bernama) -- A parliamentary caucus on illegal gambling would be formed to comprehensively address the problem, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He hoped the caucus could be set up soonest possible to enable the government together with the opposition draw up effective measures in combating illegal gambling.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Home Minister, stated the government's willingness to accept the proposed establishment of the caucus put forward by Datuk Takiyuddin Hassan (PAS-Kota Bharu) when winding up the motion of thanks for the royal address in the Dewan Rakyat, here, Monday.

"I hope we can do this together fast, to look at the existing act or policy and some procedures so that we can fine-tune them and find solutions to the (illegal gambling) problem," he said.

Ahmad Zahid said besides enhancing the existing law, cooperation from the community by upholding noble values through formal and informal education was also important in checking the menace.

Later speaking to reporters at the Parliament lobby, he said he would table the proposed setting up of the parliamentary caucus at the weekly cabinet meeting this Friday.

"I offer myself to be the chairman of the caucus and we will look at all aspects of the gambling Act, the enforcement jurisdiction or the local by-laws to curb illegal conventional or online gambling."

He said the government would also seek the cooperation of Interpol and other enforcement agencies outside the ASEAN region as the problem was being faced due to the servers to online illegal gambling being outside the country.

Earlier, in his winding-up speech, Ahmad Zahid said the Royal Malaysian Police was working with the Attorney-General's Chambers to amend the Open Gaming House Act 1953 (Act 289) which was regarded as no longer relevant in combating illegal gambling, particularly online gambling.

He said among the challenges faced in fighting illegal gambling was the frequent changing of the operators' modus operandi, such as operating from shoplots to condominiums to houses and so on, and using servers from outside the country.

Besides that, he said, illegal gambling centre operators were also found to hire tonto or informants to be on the lookout for the enforcement authorities to enable them to flee before the raids were made.

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