

**Zahid Personally Does Not Agree With Proposal to Review Marijuana Ban**  
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LAWAS (Sarawak), Feb 28 (Bernama) -- Although several European countries do not ban ganja or marijuana like in Malaysia, they have not been able to resolve the problem of drug abuse or addiction effectively.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said personally, he did not agree for the policy to be reviewed as it could only increase the number of addicts.

He said there were several proposals to review the ban on marijuana so that it could be freely used with some conditions, like in several countries in Europe.

Personally, however, he felt that these countries could not be the benchmark to legalise the use of the drug here.

"I have seen several studies...when marijuana is allowed, it has not reduced the abuse of the drug in those countries. In fact, it has resulted in repeat users and new addicts. Although the proposal has not been officially rejected, personally I do not agree with it," he said.

At a news conference held during the National Anti-Drug Day celebration in Taman Awam here today, Ahmad Zahid was commenting on the proposal by the Malaysian Youth Parliament, Spiritual and Religious Committee chairman Muhamad Ridhwan Muhamad Rosli recently to review the policy on the marijuana ban in keeping with current times, and viewing its use from a positive aspect.

Earlier, in his speech, Ahmad Zahid who is also Home Minister, said last year 26,668 addicts were detected in the country, of which 23.9 per cent were repeat offenders.

He said what was worse was that 73.4 per cent of the addicts were between 18 and 39 years of age. "In 2014, the youngest reported addict was 13 years old, and last year, there was a seven-year-old addict."

He said the National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK) had identified 178 high-risk locations in the country which were hotspots for drug distribution and abuse.

Ahmad Zahid also announced this year for an "All-Out War" against drugs by all agencies, including the police, AADK, PEMADAM and other agencies, in the effort to combat drug abuse in the country.

Earlier, Ahmad Zahid who arrived this morning began his working visit here with a tour of the Lawas district police headquarters and attending a briefing on the construction of the new headquarters building.

He said besides the Lawas headquarters, the ministry would also provide an allocation to improve the Sindumin, Merapoh and Sundar police stations.

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