

Malaysia wants to be Member of IOM - DPM
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PUTRAJAYA, Oct 31 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said Malaysia proposed to be a member of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to forge strategic cooperation, particularly in managing Syrian migrants in this country.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also home minister, in a statement said the proposal was discussed during IOM director-general William Lacy Swing's courtesy call on him at his office in Perdana Putra, here, today.

"Malaysia can benefit a lot from this strategic cooperation. IOM can also assist Malaysia in handling Syrian migrants that have arrived and will arrive in Malaysia following the conflict in that country," he said.

Also present during the one-hour courtesy visit was Deputy Home Minister Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed, the ministry's Secretary-general Datuk Seri Alwi Ibrahim, Immigration director-general Datuk Seri Mustafar Ali and head of IOM Office, Elisa Tsakiri.

Malaysia will be receiving 3,000 Syrian migrants in stages within a three-year period to help ease the refugee crisis and out of compassion and humanity.

Five hundred Syrian migrants are expected to arrive in Malaysia by the end of this year.

Ahmad Zahid said Malaysia had established cooperation with IOM since the 1970s during the influx of Vietnamese refugees into this country.

"IOM also cooperated with Malaysia in drawing up the National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons for the 2010-2015 and 2016-2020 periods."

He said although Malaysia had established cooperation with IOM several times, it was still not a member of IOM until now.

To date, IOM has 165 member countries including five from the ASEAN region, namely Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam and the Philippines.

Last month, IOM was recognised as an agency of the United Nations during the world body's 71st General Assembly in New York.

The recognition was given based on IOM's contributions and the role it plays at the international level in tackling the migration issue.

IOM conducts training courses and capacity-building programmes for ministries and government agencies on travel document security, training of trainers in the area of anti-human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, including public awareness campaigns.

It is involved in assisting the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on health screening, logistical assistance and placing of refugees in third countries.

IOM also offers expert advice on trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and on the immigration aspect.

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