

## **Malaysia Asks Thailand to Furnish List of Dual Citizens Along with Biometric Details**

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**By Mohd Haikal Mohd Isa**

BANGKOK, Aug 5 (Bernama) -- Malaysia wants Thailand to furnish a list of its citizens said to hold dual citizenship (both Malaysian and Thai) along with their biometric details so that the issue can be resolved.

Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said it was difficult to resolve the issue without the biometric details of the individuals involved.

"Malaysia is willing to cooperate (with Thailand on the issue of dual citizenship) if the biometric details are made available because we have a system for screening.

"The system used by Malaysia's National Registration Department which is the biometric system will make it easier for verification. If the bio metric data (of the dual citizens) is not available, the task will be all the more difficult," he told Malaysian journalists at the end of his two-day working visit to Thailand, here today.

Today, Ahmad Zahid, who is also Home Minister, met with Thailand's deputy prime ministers, Wissanu Krea-ngam and Gen Prawit Wongsuwan, who is also Defence Minister.

The two countries, he said, only allowed its people to hold one citizenship.

He said the issue of dual citizenship will be brought to the Joint Working Committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur this year to be ironed out.

Ahmad Zahid said there were claims that there were individuals holding dual citizenship who were facing litigation or were involved in cross-border crimes.

There have also been reports especially from Thai media that some of these dual citizens were involved in militant activities in restive southern Thailand.

Asked whether there was a time frame to settle the issue, Ahmad Zahid said:"It is open ended based on the information exchange between both countries."

On other matters, Ahmad Zahid said Malaysia also raised concerns about border breaches for the smuggling of drugs, firearms and also human trafficking.

He said border walls and fencing would be built to check these problems and that on Malaysia's part, he would be chairing a meeting of a High Committee involving various agencies like the National Security Council, Defence Ministry and Natural Resources and Environment Ministry on border issues.

Ahmad Zahid said Malaysia and Thailand had also agreed to cooperate on the International Transfer of Prisoners scheme by transferring Thai prisoners in Malaysia to prisons in their homeland.

He noted that there were 799 Thais in Malaysian prisons currently and that 79 of them were eligible to be transferred under the scheme.

The deputy prime also said there were 31 Thais on death row in prisons in Malaysia.

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