

Zakir Naik fears being tortured in India

Free Malaysia Today

April 16, 2017

By Khairil Ashraf

Islamic preacher says he is willing to be interviewed by Indian authorities, for their investigations, through video call apps like Skype.

KUALA LUMPUR: Islamic preacher Zakir Naik today said he is willing to be questioned by authorities in India on allegations that his speeches spread terrorist propaganda, but only through virtual media.

The Islamic preacher, who is currently in Malaysia, claimed he would be tortured if he returned to India where he is wanted for investigation by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

“I told (the authorities) I am ready to give the interview on Skype, phone or video conferencing,” he said.

“If I go there, they will torture me. So why should I go there?”

He said this at a press conference after receiving Perkasa’s warrior award at an event titled “Convergence of 150 intellectuals with Dr Zakir Naik: Countering Islamophobia” at the Universiti Malaya Alumni Clubhouse here.

He claimed to have proof of Indian authorities having tortured other Muslim followers.

The Times of India reported yesterday that the NIA will seek an Interpol notice against Zakir to curb his movements outside Saudi Arabia if he fails to turn up for a probe on his activities on Monday, after defying repeated summonses.

It quoted an NIA official as saying the “red corner” notice would be issued once a non-bailable warrant against him is procured.

In November last year, India banned Zakir’s Islamic Research Foundation (IRF) for five years, citing his “objectionable and subversive” speeches.

Zakir questioned why he needed to go to India to deal with the investigation when sophisticated communications technology was available.

He said this showed the Indian authorities had ulterior motives and, if they wanted to, they could come and speak to him in Malaysia.

He declined to comment on the move by Hindraf chairman P Waythamoorthy and 18 other individuals to sue the Malaysian government for allegedly harbouring him.

They had claimed that Zakir encouraged terrorism in public and that his presence was a serious threat to the country's safety. The suit was filed at the Kuala Lumpur High Court registry on March 1.

Zakir said it was a waste of time to talk about Hindraf and the group should not be given publicity.

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Source: <http://www.freemalaysiatoday.com/category/nation/2017/04/16/zakir-naik-fears-being-tortured-in-india/>