

## **Attempt To Cause Social Anxiety Reason For Arrest Of Eight Individuals - Ahmad Zahid**

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BAGAN DATUK, Oct 8 (Bernama) -- The recent arrest of eight individuals suspected of involvement in terror activities was made because there were elements suggesting they were out to cause social anxiety and fear among the multi-racial and multi-religious people in the country.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the arrest was also aimed at restricting the activities of the group to give the impression that Malaysia did not practice freedom of religion.

He said the arrest made by the Bukit Aman Special Branch Counter Terrorism team was part of the Royal Malaysian Police's (PDRM) efforts to combat elements of terrorism in the country.

"There are groups who want to destroy religious harmony in our country by wanting to burn and causing damage to our various houses of worship, such as mosques, temples and churches.

"Their goal is to give the impression that Malaysia is a country that does not practice freedom of religion and this issue should be tackled by the PDRM because we want to maintain religious harmony in this country," he said.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Bagan Datuk Member of Parliament, said this to reporters after presenting Deepavali aid to over 800 recipients in his constituency here today.

Yesterday, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Mohamad Fuzi Harun said eight men were arrested in Selangor, Sabah and Perak between Sept 27 and Oct 6 for alleged involvement in terror activities, including recruiting prisoners in the Tapah Prison to join a terrorist group and planned to launch attacks on Muslim, Christian and Hindi houses of worship to spark inter-religious conflicts in the country.

Elaborating, Ahmad Zahid said the recruiting of prisoners, however, was only detected in Tapah Prison.

"The matter was resolved by separating the prisoners involved in such activities to different cells, so that deradicalisation process could take place and prevent them from influencing other prisoners or prison officers."

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Home Minister, also gave assurance that the detention camp in Kamunting, Perak, was a rehabilitation camp and any terrorist or member of militant group, who was deemed 'very dangerous' would be placed at other prison.

"I have received the objection letter from Taiping Member of Parliament (Nga Kor Ming), who was concerned over possible terror incidents occurring at the camp," he said.

The deputy prime minister said the deradicalisation programme implemented by the Home Ministry on 15,000 detainees in the country since 1948 had seen 97.5 per cent of them rehabilitated so far.

In his speech earlier, Ahmad Zahid said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak was expected to announce a good news to the Indian community during the tabling of the 2018 Budget later this month.

As such, he called on the Indian community to continue giving their support to the Barisan Nasional-led government to enable the Indian Community Action Plan for the next 10 years to be implemented.

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