

## Govt will not bow to human rights groups` call to legalise certain drugs, says DPM

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government will not legalise any form of drugs including marijuana, "pil kuda" and "ketum".

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi (*pix*) said Malaysia will not bow to pressure by several human rights groups who are pushing for the legalisation of certain type of drugs.

"I would like to state that the government will never submit and compromise to legalise any type of drugs in Malaysia.

"We will also not compromise on the usage of 'daum ketum', despite it being traditionally used as an energy enhancer.

"We view 'daum ketum' as a form of drug and thus will not compromise to allow its usage," he told the Dewan Negara during the question and answer session today.

Ahmad Zahid was responding to a supplementary question from Senator Datuk Mohd Suhaimi Abdullah who had asked about the government's stand on the legalisation of marijuana.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also the Home Minister, said loosening several acts on drugs and allowing legalisation would not guarantee that the issue of drug abuse could be solved.

He also issued a warning to drug kingpins in the country that the authorities would not back down in its war against drug abuse and distribution.

"Many of our efforts has been fruitful, but the government is not satisfied as many of the syndicates managed to intercept efforts taken by the authorities.

"They do not only operate in our region, but also in Europe, North America and other continents," he added.

Ahmad Zahid said based on statistics from the National Anti-Drug Agency, a total of 131,841 Malaysians were identified as drug abusers from 2010 to 2016.

"It should also be noted that 42% of inmates in prisons throughout Malaysia were involved in drug-related crimes," he said.