

Scepticism abounds over PM-Christian group meeting
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Today's meeting between representatives of the Council of Churches of Malaysia and Prime Minister Najib Razak that was requested by the PM's office to lower tensions arising from inflammatory reports in Utusan Malaysia is not likely to resolve anything.

This is the opinion of a frequent past attendee at meetings of Christian groups with Malaysian PMs who asked to remain anonymous.

"We have met him (Najib) and his predecessor and his predecessor's predecessor often enough," said the now retired past participant.

"There's plenty of froth but little of substance achieved at these meetings. It's good at promoting a 'feel good' atmosphere but after you have come away, the same difficulties recur," he added.

According to him, there was little reason to doubt the sincerity of the PMs the Christian groups interfaced with at the meetings, but he doubted their resolve to tackle the core issues.

He said that for this reason he expected Christian representatives to approach today's meeting with Najib with feelings nearer to resignation than to hope.

"This is because there have been too many meetings in the past when much good feeling was generated that a fresh start could be made only for that expectation to collide with forbidding realities later," he opined.

No real resolve from PM

"This has saddled us with the feeling that there is no real resolve to tackle the core issues," he said.

"After a while, you feel silly to be imbued with the 'feel good' sensation that inevitably arises from meeting with someone who is intent on being amenable.

"But when that feeling collides with the facts on the ground, you feel silly for having allowed yourself to be deluded and then you have a hard time avoiding the resulting cynicism," said the veteran of several such meetings.

He said unless Najib is intent on tackling the core problems, meetings such as the one he has requested today would be an exercise in self-delusion.

"If differences are fundamental between Islam and the other religions, then I think it's better to face that reality squarely rather than go round the bush once too often," he opined.

Last Saturday, Umno-owned Utusan published a front-page report alleging that a group of Christians sought to create a Christian state in collusion with opposition party DAP.

This came in the wake of a litany of problems faced by the minority Christians in Malaysia, including the ban on the use of the term 'Allah' in their Malay Bible.