

PM to meet with retired top armed forces officers

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak is to host retired senior armed forces officers at his residence in Putrajaya tomorrow for a briefing on the Lahad Datu intrusion.

Sources said that the officers would be bused into Putrajaya from staging points at Shah Alam and Sungai Besi for a two-hour session tea from 4pm to 6pm.

Speculation as to the reasons behind the briefing revolve around fears that the government is being put in a bad light over the intrusion by about 250 armed men who landed on the eastern coast of Sabah on Feb 12.

The deaths of 52 of the intruders and 10 people, including nine members of our security forces, have been attributed to a failure of intelligence to foresee the situation and take the necessary preventive steps.

Last Tuesday, a seminar on the intrusion organised by the Retired Armed Forces Officers Club (Rafoc) held at the Subang National Golf Club turned out to be an attempt by Rafoc administrators to deflect criticism by senior retired personnel of the government's handling of the intrusion.

Sources who attended the seminar said questions from attendees imputing a failure of intelligence were not adequately refuted.

At least one four-star general, a full admiral and an air force general were said to be sceptical about explanations put forth by Rafoc administrators that the government's handling of the intrusion was not inept.

The same sources say the PM's invitation to these officers to the briefing may have been prompted by the scepticism with which the government's version of events was received at the Rafoc session.

It is not known whether the senior retired officers who have recently joined the opposition Pakatan Rakyat and have travelled the ceramah circuit in recent weeks would be attending the event at the PM's residence.

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