

## **PM's moderation all talk abroad, silence at home**

**MalaysiaKini.com**

**Jan 17, 2014**

MP SPEAKS When Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak addressed the audience during the 68th session of the United Nations General Assembly at the United Nations in New York on Sep 28, 2013, he talked the topic that he likes best - moderation.

Najib also said he was committed to "mutual respect and inclusivity" in Malaysia, which is more than 60 percent Muslim ethnic Malay with sizeable Chinese and Indian minorities.

On July 28, 2011, he talked about the need for the nation to move from tolerance to acceptance during his working visit to Kedah.

"I invite all Malaysians to move from the concept of tolerance to acceptance. Tolerance is not so meaningful... there are still dividing walls and feelings of our difference from one another," he said.

No one can disagree that the nation should move from tolerance to acceptance. But what has the government done to move the nation from tolerance to acceptance?

If Najib is committed to and has walked his talk on moderation and the need to move the nation from tolerance to acceptance, Malaysia certainly would not be included as one of the 24 nations with "very high" government restrictions on religion in the Restrictions on Religion report by American think-tank Pew Research Centre.

The report has measured "government laws, policies and actions that restrict religious beliefs and practices" for its Government Restrictions Index and placed Malaysia on par with countries like Egypt, Syria, Russia, Sudan and Iraq.

As the report only covered events till the end of 2012, Malaysia would have fared worse had the recent raid on the Bible Society of Malaysia (BSM) been included and measured in the report.

Najib must know that his government is judged by its laws, policies and actions, and not by what he says.

Why has the government allowed the mercury to continue to rise over race and

religion in recent years, let alone moving the nation in the direction of embracing acceptance?

Why has Najib kept silent and allow reactionary and extreme voices to grow and grow louder?

His deafening silence on the Selangor Islamic Religious Department's (Jais) raid on BSM and his failure thus far to reaffirm the cabinet's 10 point-solution are disappointing and baffling.

Najib needs no reminder that the world is watching how he deals with the recent 'Allah' issue and Malaysians have been calling on him to show his leadership and courage in resolving the issue.

He should prove to the nation and the world that he can walk his talk on the concepts of moderation and moving the nation from tolerance to acceptance.

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