

Calm down, Najib tells Muslim NGOs

MalaysiaKini.com

Jan 30, 2014

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today took his first step to quell rising religious tensions by meeting with Muslim NGOs, during which he urged calm on the 'Allah' issue.

Umno supreme council member Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki said the meeting between Najib and 40 Muslim NGOs today was a pivotal move to strengthen inter-racial ties.

Met after the meeting, Asyraf said the meeting was called because there is concern among the rakyat that the Najib administration has not been stern on the matter.

"Najib is a leader for all. So, as a leader, it is important not to fuel the fire. As prime minister, his role is to ease the anger.

"He asked the Malay-Muslim NGOs to play that role as well," Asyraf told MalaysiaKini at the lobby of the Prime Minister's Office.

He said the view is that unity and stability must be of utmost priority and defended against "power crazy" quarters that were "playing up" the issue.

Among the NGOs in attendance were Yayasan Dakwah Islamiah Malaysia (Yadim), Persatuan Pengguna Islam Malaysia (PPIM), Persatuan Veteran Tentera Malaysia, Himpunan Siswazah Malaysia dan Gabungan Gagasan Felda Malaysia.

Last week, Umno Pasir Salak members demonstrated outside the party headquarters in Kuala Lumpur and urged the prime minister to defend the exclusive right of Muslims to the word 'Allah'.

Don't let 'Allah' issue divide us

Najib had, during the Umno general assembly last year, promised to defend the use of the word 'Allah', which has been the source of rising tensions between Muslim and Christian quarters.

Asyraf, who had arranged the meeting between the PM and the NGOs, further expressed concern over the rising costs of living.

However, he said Najib has asked the NGOs to become the voice of the government in addressing the people's eroding faith in Umno BN, especially on the Internet and social media.

"It will be a clash for who get to lead the perception, wins in social media.

"For example, earlier there were some who said the government is not firm in dealing with current issues and Najib explained the government's approach and actions. I saw that many NGO leaders were satisfied with Najib's explanation," he said.

Meanwhile, Najib, who during a brief press conference did not talk much on the 40-minute meeting, said that the differences between the people are not a hindrance for unity.

"We do not allow this issue ('Allah') to divide us. There is definitely differences in opinion, (but that) must not widen the gap between us," he said.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/253195>