

Don't give extremists publicity, says PM
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has urged the media and social media not to give in to instigators by giving publicity to extremist remarks.

In a blog post today, he said sharing such remarks would only give extremists the “publicity they crave”.

“We don’t have to condemn them, just ignore them. Don’t give them the air time or the publicity,” he said, adding that poor publicity would also hinder the recruitment drives of such groups.

Reporting on extremist actions, Najib said, could break down trust between the different ethnic groups.

“You know that what these extremist groups are doing and saying on social media sites are wrong, so should we share such views online?”

“If you want to preserve the harmony of this country, don’t let these instigators overpower us! Even better, don’t pass on news of such incidents as it is almost certain to incite fear and hatred.”

Instead, he said, Malaysians should “destroy” extremist groups by sharing stories of kindness and having faith in one another.

“For example, sharing a picture of a Malay policeman helping an old Chinese lady cross the road helps to reinforce what we already know but have forgotten, that we are all part of a Malaysian family,” he said.

“If you want a better nation, if you want to have your faith restored in one another, then take the steps needed to do it.

“Once you do this, it will not matter who says what or which group makes silly demands, because you will know how you, your neighbours and, by extension, how most Malaysians feel.”

Najib's call comes as race and religious tensions rise in Malaysia following disputes over several issues, including the use of 'Allah' by non-Muslims in Peninsular Malaysia.

The tensions led to DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang and PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim calling on the government to join Pakatan Rakyat in formulating a consensus on national unity.

In response, Najib said that government would formulate a national reconciliation plan.

'I called for reconciliation first'

However, in his blog post, Najib insisted that it was he, and not Pakatan, that first called for national unity following the narrowly fought 13th general election last May.

"I am sure most of you recall that immediately after GE13, I was the first to call for national reconciliation while others were only concerned with questioning the legitimacy of the elections, which has been proven to be completely baseless.

"It was not an idle call. After months of quiet work on it, we are now almost ready to implement our plan of action," Najib said, thanking all, including opposition leaders, for their input.

He said that the National Reconciliation Plan would be unveiled and implemented in the next few months on the principles of "respect, working and playing together".

"What we want to do is to help inspire the rakyat to respect and reconnect with one another so as to make Malaysia a better home for all of us... This should underpin all that we do," he added.

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