

PM dismisses critics, says protecting peace

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UMNO AGM Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today brushed aside the criticism against him for reneging on his promise to abolish the Sedition Act, saying that his priority was the country's peace.

"The international media have started attacking me, saying that I broke my promise and have become authoritarian.

"I would like to say, my responsibility as prime minister is to safeguard peace and security in our country," he said in his winding-up speech.

Najib, who is also Umno president, said he had listened to the "pulse of the people".

"I have been following the developments and opinions.

"If Umno's voice wants the Sedition Act to be maintained, I accept the will of Umno members as a whole," he said.

No more warnings

The prime minister also said that there is a limit to freedom in the country.

"There is no absolute freedom - we cannot insult Islam, challenge the Malay special's position, question the royalty, the Malay army - and at the same time the interests of other races must also be safeguarded," he added.

However, Najib stressed that the retaining and strengthening of the colonial law does not mean that it would be unfairly used.

"This Sedition Act protects everyone, it protects both Muslims and non-Muslims.

"If we are not seditious, there is nothing for us to be worried about," he said.

He pointed out that in 1978, a BN MP Mark Koding was even convicted under the Sedition Act for suggesting that vernacular schools be abolished.

He added that name calling among friends is fine but calling people of other races "pendatang" (immigrants) would court unhappiness.

Najib also echoed Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's call, urging the police, the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) as well as the

Attorney-General's Chambers to cooperate to secure prosecutions under the Sedition Act.

"I ask that the attorney-general be firm on this matter. We also ask the police and MCMC to investigate to send a clear signal.

"We do not want to issue any more warnings, we want to ensure peace in the country," he added.

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