

PM flies back to flood-hit states amid flak

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Amid scathing criticism over his holiday in the US as the country sees its worst flooding in recent years, Prime Minister Najib Razak said he is returning to oversee operations in the East Coast.

A statement from the Prime Minister's office said Najib, whose plane is currently in Los Angeles at press time, will convene a meeting in Kelantan on Saturday upon arrival.

"Upon arrival in Kelantan, the prime minister will chair a meeting and receive briefings from the National Security Council, the National Disaster Management and Relief Committee, the state government and local emergency responders.

"The prime minister will also meet people affected by the flooding and discuss new measures to support those who have been displaced," read the statement.

The government spokesperson said that Najib had received daily updates on the situation, and spoke to Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin to instruct the National Disaster Management and Relief Committee to step up their efforts to assist those affected by the floods.

"Following recent reports that the situation had continued to worsen, the prime minister felt it was necessary to return to personally oversee the response."

According to a Bernama report, 118,896 had been evacuated so far: 45,467 in Kelantan, 31,001 in Terengganu; 35,736 in Pahang; 6,119 in Perak; 214 in Johor; 96 in Kedah; and 263 in Perlis.

Najib has received growing criticism from opposition and netizens alike for carrying on his holiday in Hawaii while the country is swamped in an unprecedented deluge.

The PM had managed to sneak some time on the golf course on Christmas eve with US president Barack Obama in Hawaii, The Washington Post had reported.

Meanwhile, Najib today said he was "deeply concerned" by the floods.

"I feel for the people who have lost their homes, and the families who have lost loved ones.

"While I have been away, I have been in constant contact with the National Security Council and the National Disaster Management and Relief Committee, who have assured me that they are doing everything they can to help those who have been affected.

"But I want to see the situation for myself and be with the people," he said.

Private jet lands in Indianapolis

Meanwhile, Najib's private jet, registered as 9M-NAA, landed in Indianapolis, Indiana, from Los Angeles at 6.52pm Malaysian time, according to online flight tracking website FlightRadar24.

The plane landed at Los Angeles airport at 1.40pm Malaysian time from Honolulu, Hawaii, where he was on holiday.

The prime minister has cut short his vacation and is expected to arrive in Kelantan tomorrow to oversee rescue operations.

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