

PM ticks off protesters, issues sedition warning

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has ticked off the protesters who demanded a church to remove a cross and said the police would investigate the incident.

He said the protesters can be hauled up under the Sedition Act 1948 if their action is deemed to have breached the legislation, which was recently fortified to tackle issues pertaining to race and religion.

"The Sedition Act is to ensure peace and harmony between the races and safeguards all religions and races," he added in a statement.

Najib said the people must abide by the law and respect the practice of other religions as enshrined in the federal constitution.

"Apart from this, we must practice tolerance and mutual respect among the various races and faiths," he added.

The prime minister also revealed that the Taman Medan protest was discussed during the cabinet meeting today.

The ministers, he said, felt that the residents should have discussed their grouses with the relevant authorities and not resort to actions that can cause uneasiness in a multiracial society.

Najib pointed out that whether the church, located in a shoplot, has been registered as a place of worship and has the permission to operate, fell under the Selangor government's purview

On Sunday, some 50 Muslim residents staged a protest outside the church, calling on the removal of the cross, which they argued should not be placed at a high vantage point.

The church complied with the demand but the incident drew widespread condemnation, including from BN leaders.

It was initially reported that the protest was led by inspector-general of police Khalid Abu Bakar's brother Abdullah.

However, Abdullah, who is an Umno branch chairperson, later claimed that he was present to mediate between the protesters and church officials.

Khalid then came under fire when he claimed that there were no seditious elements in the protest.

Soon after that, Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the protest was seditious and added that Umno members who participated would face action.

Besides Abdullah, who heads the Taman Lindungan Jaya Umno branch, the protest also saw the presence Munaliza Hamzah, who was the Umno candidate for the Taman Medan state seat in the last general election.

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