

PM Najib tells Perkasa to 'tone down'

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By Koh Jun Lin

Disputes concerning religion should not be resolved through the court of law, says Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

"I believe that we should not resort to the legal process, if possible. I believe that if there is a problem, sit down. Discuss.

"Talk it over (such as during) a big makan (meal) like this," Najib said at the launch of Christians for Peace and Harmony in Malaysia (CPHM) at the Majestic Hotel in Kuala Lumpur last night.

Najib applauded the fact that groups representing different religious groups attended the launch of CPHM and said a matured society was predicated on strong ties among adherents of different faiths.

"The Malays say 'tak kenal, tak cinta'. There is a lot of meaning in that proverb. Sit down, meet one another frequently. Then you will have the sense of comfort with one another," he said.

Following this, Najib pointed out that there were Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM) representatives in attendance, as well as officials from Malay rights pressure group Perkasa.

"Hopefully, Perkasa will tone down a bit," Najib said in jest, triggering laughter from the 1,200 people in attendance.

'There's no perfect solution'

On a more serious note, Najib said there are solutions to every problem, even this is not a perfect solution.

"Sometimes, it is better to accept a 70 percent solution than not having a solution at all," he added.

It is possible that Najib's "70 percent solution" was in reference to the outright ban on the usage of the Bahasa Malaysia Bible in Peninsula Malaysia.

This would affect churches in Peninsula Malaysia catering to Malay speaking congregations, such as the people from Sabah and Sarawak.

Nevertheless, Najib said that if different groups were to work together, Malaysia would become a greater nation.

"And as your prime minister, I am committed to make Malaysia great," he said.

When approached later, Perkasa president Ibrahim Ali (photo) said being told to "tone down" by the prime minister was a form of recognition of Perkasa's role as a defender of the Federal Constitution, particularly on Islam's position as the official religion of the country.

"It is a recognition of Perkasa's role. I don't feel offended," Ibrahim said.

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