

Universal human rights not for us, says PM

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Malaysia must defend its version of human rights, even if it is not internationally acceptable, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said today.

"Even though universal human rights have been defined, in our country, human rights is defined in the context of Islam," Najib told an international Islamic forum in Bangi today

"Even though it is difficult to defend internationally, we must defend our definition of human rights," he said at the wassatiah (moderation) forum.

Najib said this was to discourage youths from being influenced by extremists or liberal groups, such as the Islamic State terrorists and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

While he has been an open and receptive prime minister, Najib said, views that stray too far from the tenets of Islam cannot be accepted.

"As such, I believe wassatiah is the best approach to curb these ideologies," he said.

Malaysia's human rights record has often been criticised.

The US State Department's Human Rights Report on Malaysia 2014 highlighted a laundry list of abuses, including alleged sedition-based investigations, the prosecution of former opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, restrictions on religious freedom, deaths in custody and detentions without trial.

Other areas of concern listed in the report are proselytising and prohibitions on the freedom to change one's religion, discrimination against the LGBT community and labour problems, including the plights of migrant workers.

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