

'Asean must respond strongly against regional terrorism'

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Former prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has urged the Asean Summit to come up with a stronger response towards terrorism, particularly following the intrusion into Sabah and Abu Sayyaf's kidnapping and beheading of a Malaysian hostage.

"They have to (come out with a stronger response on these incidents). This is all I can say," he told a press conference at the Asean Young Leaders Summit in Kuala Lumpur.

When asked for his suggestions, Abdullah, who was the foreign minister from 1991 to 1999, and prime minister from 2003 to 2009, said, "We will see tomorrow."

The ongoing Asean Summit from Nov 18 to 22 is expected to discuss the direction of Asean's future, political-security situation, and economy.

The security of the South China Sea and terrorism are expected to be the focus of the summits.

"They know it; they know the situation of the area. But it will be on us (to decide) if it is going to be good or bad," he said.

'Asean means home'

According to Abdullah, based on his experience, Asean member countries will work in the spirit of a family.

Abdullah, who is also fondly known as Pak Lah, shared his experience on how Asean dealt with regional dispute during his tenure as the prime minister.

He said leaders need to act fast to nip it in the bud.

"If the trouble still goes on, we will continue to deal with it. (We would say,) 'Come on, stop it.'," he said.

Meanwhile, Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said he sees Asean as a "home".

"I was once asked at an interview, 'What does Asean mean to you?', I said, 'Asean means home.'

"I am a Malaysian, but I am an 'Aseanist'. I came up with the word 'Aseanist' to describe I am from Southeast Asia," he said.

"We must make sure we are able to identify ourselves as Asean at the people-to-people level, particularly the youth. We must make sure that we are able to say we are from Asean," he said when delivering his speech at the youth summit.

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