

As a leader, I cannot be daunted, says Najib
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Despite coming under attack and criticism from various quarters, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak is always a picture of calm and discharges his responsibilities as usual.

Sharing his secret of being so composed, Najib, who is also Umno president, said: "As a leader, I cannot be daunted."

He said he was aware that every leader or individual could not escape from being tested by Allah (God), no matter in whatever way.

In fact, Najib said, the challenges he faced now were not as major as those during the time of former prime ministers like Abdul Razak Hussein and Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"During his time, Tun Razak faced the test of the May 13 incident while Dr Mahathir was confronted with even more challenges when Umno was declared illegal, the devastating financial crisis with many going bankrupt and the problem of (Datuk Seri) Anwar Ibrahim," he said in an interview at his office in conjunction with the 70th anniversary of Umno.

The interview was conducted by Prof Dr Azizul Halim Yahya, dean of the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Universiti Teknologi Mara.

"In my time, the issues are actually not so big but due to the social media and parties using the foreign media, it brought on a little more pressure," said Najib.

According to the prime minister, the issues faced by him were unlike the Asian financial crisis at one time or when Umno was declared illegal because the country's economic and political fundamentals were still strong.

"It is just a perception, as people in the west say the noise level is slightly louder due to the roles played by the social media and foreign press," he said.

Asked how he garnered such grit to continue to be resilient up till today, Najib said it was derived from the unwavering support of the leaders and members of Umno as well as their confidence in his leadership.

"The question of attacks is more due to the social media. In the past, there was no social media but with social media, news goes viral fast.

"This is a new challenge in a changing environment. I am the Umno president facing such a situation. I would not know if there were such things in the past, maybe the past Umno presidents would have faced even more pressure," he said.

Nevertheless, Najib stressed that he was steadfast as he was confident that whatever he did was right and with good intention for the party, people and nation.

On the specific measures taken to handle challenges of the social media, Najib said Umno leaders and members needed to be trained to be active social media practitioners at all levels.

He said Umno should change from the politics of old to the new and a new environment in line the development of the internet.

"Even though we only have Facebook and Twitter, at least we can comment on Facebook and Twitter. So, this is what I consider as the new politics in the new environment," he said.

Najib said that if Umno wanted to be successful as a party with sustainable influence and to remain relevant for all time, it had to change as well as have the capacity to adapt to the new environment.

"We have accepted Malaysia as an open country. It means we have also accepted whatever development from the aspect of technology to become a modern and progressive country.

"So, whatever the social media technology based on the development of the internet, we have accepted it here as Malaysia is a country where information is open. We cannot change that and we cannot backtrack," he said.

- *Bernama*

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