

## **Prioritise checking the truth of any information, says PM**

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The principle of 'fiqh tabayyun' (checking the truth of any information) should be given priority and become a knowledge field to be mastered by Muslims in Malaysia, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said.

He said he felt apprehensive if the Muslims themselves no longer adopted the 'tabayyun' principle on any news received and instead preferred to believe the slander.

"The Islamic civilisation was built by the people with the right attitude towards the principles of knowledge and the definition of truth.

"Social media should not be a tool to destabilise the 'maqasid al-shariah' (objectives of Islamic law) principle. Slander has become widespread to the extent of disrupting the five cores of 'maqasid al-shariah,' namely religion, intellect, property, life and ancestry, which should be strictly rejected," Najib said at the opening of the International Wasatiyyah Seminar 2016 'Fiqh Tabayyun: Facing Social Media Challenges and Defamation' in Shah Alam last night.

The text of his speech was read out by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Jamil Khir Baharom, who also launched the seminar on behalf of the prime minister.

Also present were Islamic Affairs Adviser to the prime minister Abdullah Md Zin, who is also Malaysian Wasatiyyah Institute (IWM) chairperson, and Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) vice-chancellor Prof Emeritus Hassan Said.

About 500 guests attended the event organised by the IWM in collaboration with the UiTM's Faculty of Communication and Media Studies.

Najib said that as the leader of the government, he had never manipulated data and statistics to mislead the people and the general public.

### **'We must give priority to truth and rights'**

"I always remind my cabinet members that we must give priority to the truth and rights. Not manipulating any facts for their own or a small group's benefit.

"Unfortunately, the same approach is not being adopted by other parties. They think that the truth exclusively belongs to them... when we give a counter argument, they consider it as government propaganda and even equate us to Joseph Goebbels and Hitler," Najib said.

"This approach violates manners... This is the 'beyond the truth' political approach...this is a selfish and a greed for power political approach," he said.

As such, Najib said the government left it to the people to decide and if they were wise, they

would adopt the 'fiqh tabayyun' as a knowledge discipline in measuring the level of truth of any matter, the majority of people would continue to support the government's development agenda.

If the majority of the people were not rational and not adopting the 'tabayyun' principle, he said, it was certain that the country would be in a difficult political situation.

"Based on defamation, lies and incitement (in making claims) that Malaysia will go bankrupt for so many times. The tabling of the Budget 2017 gives a true picture that the economy still remains strong, intact... people being declared bankrupt are actually those who are greedy for power," he said.

The prime minister also welcomed the establishment of the Media Literacy Centre, which aims to become a driving force and impetus to strengthening efforts to disseminate the 'fiqh tabayyun' discipline.

"The centre should move proactively in reaching out to the media, the general public as well as young Malaysians to give them an understanding of the importance of screening and filtering information, thus emphasising the true meaning of principles of right and truth," Najib added.

- *Bernama*

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