

## **Multi-agency special force set up to respond to terrorist threats**

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The government has established the National Special Operations Force (NSOF) as the first responder to threats of terrorism.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said the team, comprising 17 officers and 170 personnel from the Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM), Royal Malaysian Police (PDRM) and Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), was ready to be mobilised at any time.

"Previously, when something happens, we don't know whether to send the police or army to deal with it, so with the NSOF, it will become the first team to respond.

"When facing a threat, the armed forces chief and inspector-general of police will assess the threat before sending a report to the prime minister before any action can be taken, in line with the National Security Council Act," he told a press conference after launching the NSOF team at the Sungai Besi Camp yesterday.

Also present were Defence Minister Hishammuddin Hussein, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Shahidan Kassim, attorney-general Mohamad Apandi Ali and Armed Forces chief Zulkifeli Mohd Zin.

Najib said the team was undergoing training at the Sungai Besi camp.

"I was told that this is a task force of various agencies (namely) the ATM, police, and MMEA. It is the first of its kind in the world being set up by a government."

The prime minister said the team had begun training together for the past six months but had yet to be involved in any operation.

Earlier in his speech, Najib said the government took the global terrorism incidents seriously, especially involving Islamic State (IS) militants such as in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

"To date, a total of 250 Malaysians who are involved with IS militants, have been detained in the country, 32 people have died in Iraq and Syria while more than 60 people are still fighting for the retrograde ideology," he said.

### **Improved preparedness**

Najib said the development of social media had influenced the society on IS militant group ideology, for example the attack on Movidia nightclub in Puchong last June.

"Fortunately, no fatal casualties, only eight were injured. Are we sure this thing will not recur? With the establishment of NSOF, it will improve our preparedness, and our ability to eradicate any incidents at any time," he said.

The application for new staffing will be made once the team starts to operate and for a start, all of the NSOF personnel are on secondment from the three agencies.

At the event, Najib also approved an allocation of RM200,000 to improve the infrastructure for the NSOF team at the camp.

- *Bernama*

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