

## **PM tells media to be extra careful with opposition**

**Malaysiakini.com**

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has urged the media to adopt a cautious approach when dealing with opposition parties' statements, especially PAS, in view of the controversy over the use of the term 'Allah' by Catholic magazine *Herald*.

This was conveyed during a meeting with about 40 representatives from media organisations at Najib's office in Putrajaya yesterday, according to a report on *therocknews.com*.



The Chinese daily news portal reported that Najib told the media organisations not to sensationalise the controversy, but instead stress the need for harmony to prevent religious conflict.

Unlike Najib's Umno, their main rivals PAS and PKR have been offering conditional support for the court decision which overturned the Home Ministry's ban on the *Herald's* use of the term 'Allah' in its Bahasa Malaysia section.

Both PAS and PKR have been accusing Umno and their proxies, particularly the party owned Malay daily *Utusan Malaysia* of fanning racial and religious sentiments for political purposes.

The Umno-led federal government is challenging the court ruling to reinstate the ban over fears that since the use of the term 'Allah' is exclusive to Muslims, the use by non-Muslims will confuse the former.

## **PM promises 'Allah' solution**

The *therocknews.com* report said Najib assured those present that the government was aware of the sensitivities surrounding the controversy, and pledged to remedy the situation as soon as possible.

A source who attended the meeting told *Malaysiakini* that Najib said the government was caught in a bind since Christians in East Malaysia had long used 'Allah' as a term for God, but this was objected to by Muslims in the Peninsula.

Traditionally, closed-door meetings between prime ministers and top editors occur from time to time, but online news portals, even those with government accreditation, are never invited.

In reaction to the *Herald's* court victory, nine churches across Malaysia have been attacked since Jan 8. One of which, the Metro Tabernacle in Wangsa Maju was badly gutted in a fire.

The police have yet to arrest anyone, but claim to be closing in on the suspects.

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