



**Church attacks 'minor aberration': PM  
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Prime Minister Najib Razak said attacks on churches in his country were a "minor aberration" that did not reflect the feelings of most Malaysian Muslims, in an interview published yesterday.

"This is a minor aberration. National unity and mutual respect between various racial and religious communities in Malaysia has been a cornerstone of Malaysia for a long time," he said in the interview with *Okaz* newspaper and published in its English-language sister, the *Saudi Gazette*.

"It should not be seen as a widespread attempt by the larger Muslim community to attack churches in Malaysia," he said.

Several churches in predominantly Muslim Malaysia have been attacked after a court ruled on Dec 31 that non-Muslims could use 'Allah' as a translation for 'God'.

Nine churches were hit with Molotov cocktails, splashed with black paint and had windows smashed with stones, triggering tighter security at places of worship nationwide.

The offices of lawyers for Malaysia's Roman Catholic Church were also burgled and ransacked.

**Only one church burnt**

Najib downplayed the attacks.

"I would like to clarify that only one church was burnt and only its administrative portion was set ablaze," he told the Saudi newspaper.

"The others were minor incidents, which do not really constitute burning at all. And in some cases various objects were reportedly thrown into the compounds of some churches."

Najib also questioned a US travel advisory for Malaysia that warned of possible attacks on foreigners.

"I am quite surprised they came up with the travel advisory. We have no credible information regarding the perceived threat," he said.

On Friday, the US State Department issued a travel alert advising Americans to "consider the risks associated with travel to eastern Sabah in Malaysia due to the threat from both terrorist and criminal groups."

Najib was speaking while on a short trip to Saudi Arabia, where he met King Abdullah and other top officials and visited educational institutions.

- AFP