

## **Najib condemns 'burn Quran' act as 'totally deplorable'**

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PUTRAJAYA – Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak on Friday condemned the plan by a radical Florida pastor in the United States to burn the Quran Saturday to commemorate the Sept 11 terrorist attacks in New York nine years ago.

The premier described the act as "totally deplorable".

He said it was an act of total defiance and an act of an uncivilised (person), and should be condemned by rational-thinking people.

"It is going to have very serious consequences. I really hope and pray that (US) President Barack Obama and the United States government will be able to do something to prevent this from happening," he said at the Aidilfitri open house at the prime minister's official residence, Seri Perdana, here.

Pastor Terry Jones of the Dove World Outreach Centre in Florida had announced that he planned to burn the Quran on Saturday, drawing worldwide criticism from both Christians and Muslims.

Najib said he hoped that the pastor would have a change of heart because by this single act of abhorrence he would ignite the feelings of Muslims throughout the world and the consequences, it was feared, would be "very, very costly".

"So, I hope everybody will do their utmost not to allow this thing to happen because it is only going to make Muslims and non-Muslims the world over to descent into a very dangerous chapter in a relationship which should be getting better and better as we go forward," he said.

He said he also hoped that his statement would be echoed around the world by other Muslim leaders.

The international media reported Friday that Jones had "suspended" his threat to burn the Quran.

In JOHOR BARU, the Catholic Church of the Melaka-Johor Diocese has condemned the planned action by the Dove World Outreach Centre.

In a statement, the bishop of the diocese, Rt Rev Paul Tan Chee Ing, labelled the act as immoral.

"We have no right to denigrate the beliefs of other religions. Mutual respect and acceptance are the stepping stones to harmony," he said in the signed statement written in English, Mandarin and Bahasa Malaysia. — Bernama

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