

Let's Not Blame Anyone Over Journalist's Killing, Says PM
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PETALING JAYA -- Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak today urged the people not to point fingers at anyone over the recent killing of a Malaysian journalist in Somalia.

"Let's not play this blame game. The most important thing for us is to take stock of what has happened," he told a media conference at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) base in Subang near here after joining the family of slain BernamaTV cameraman Noramfaizul Mohd Nor for the arrival of the journalist's remains from Mogadishu.

Najib said even international media organisations such as BBC and CNN had lost their journalists in shooting deaths in conflict zones around the world.

Noramfaizul, 39, was killed on Friday after he was shot while travelling in a four-wheel-drive vehicle with other Malaysian media personnel covering the humanitarian aid mission to Somalia by the Putera 1Malaysia Club.

"There's a limit to what you can prepare for any eventuality. Insyallah (God willing), we'll try our level best in the future to prevent such a thing from happening again. No one can guarantee anything. But if you're not prepared to take the risk, then stay home," said Najib.

"This is part and parcel (of journalism). You can take precautionary and safety measures but there's no absolute guarantee (of safety) once you're in places of conflict such as Libya, Egypt and Gaza where lives of journalists have been lost," he said.

A total of 23 journalists have lost their lives while on duty in troubled Somalia since 2007.

The remaining 54 members of the Putera 1Malaysia Club humanitarian mission to Somalia also flew into Subang on board the aircraft carrying Noramfaizul's remains.

Najib said the safety of members of humanitarian missions abroad was in the hands of the local security forces.

"We cannot insist on more than what they can and are prepared to provide. However, we will try to ensure that the level of security is at its best," he said.

Najib said he was satisfied with the security measures provided for the Malaysian aid mission in Somalia because all its requests had been met.

"This (the shooting incident) was totally unexpected. It can be said that Noramfaizul was not a target," he said.

The prime minister said he would be in a better position to elaborate on the incident after getting a full report which the Somali government had promised to send to him soon.

"I would like to wait for the report before commenting further because the incident has to be investigated thoroughly in order for us to arrive at a conclusion," he said.

Asked whether Malaysia would continue to send humanitarian missions abroad, Najib said the Somali incident should not be seen as a setback to efforts to help the less fortunate.

Najib said Malaysia was well known for its generosity in assisting other countries according to its capacity.

"More importantly, we have to undertake all preparations and preventive measures (against untoward

incidents) as best as we can," he said.

Najib congratulated the Putera 1Malaysia Club for its high level of enthusiasm and readiness to even put lives at risk in undertaking the humanitarian aid mission which he described as a huge contribution to the nation.

(Bernama)

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