

PM fears execution will worsen violence in Iraq

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KUALA LUMPUR: The execution of former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein must not result in the prolonging of violence and misery in Iraq, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

"I fear that the sentencing and execution of Saddam Hussein will worsen the existing sectarian violence that has prevented any meaningful nation building or reconstruction from taking place," the prime minister said in a statement issued to Bernama last night.

He said the people of Iraq should resolve to overcome their differences and begin to embark on a new era of national reconciliation and national unity.

"In this regard, I hope that the present Iraqi government will be guided by the principles of justice and fairness in matters of governance, ensuring that all Iraqis are treated equally and with dignity."

Abdullah said Iraq had a history

of greatness, stability and prosperity.

He said the people of Iraq should be allowed to determine for themselves how they wished to restore peace, stability and prosperity to their country.

"The international community must assist the people of Iraq in all appropriate ways to enable them to achieve this objective and determine their own future."

The prime minister said any external interference and presence that contributed to the endless cycle of violence must end immediately.

He urged the international community to bear its will on those who continued to refuse the Iraqi people true freedom.

"I pray for the people of Iraq and for peace and stability in Iraq."

In **Pekan**, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the government respected the decision to execute Saddam, writes

Shahrum Sayuthi.

He said it was the right of the Iraqi government to decide on Saddam's execution.

"We respect the decision as it was made by a legitimate government which was elected by its people," said Najib, who is also the **Pekan** MP, after presenting awards and gifts to students who scored excellent results in the **Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah**.

The event was organised by **Putera Umno** in **SMK Seri Pekan** here yesterday.

Najib, however, expressed concern over the effect of the execution on the people of the war-torn country.

"I would like to express our concerns, and those of the international community, on the court process which led to the decision to execute Saddam.

"We are worried that this execution will cause the conflict in

Iraq to worsen."

Najib said Malaysia and the rest of the world had a valid reason to voice their concerns over Saddam's execution.

He stressed that the international community must not in any way ignore the sufferings of the Iraqi people ever since the country was invaded by the United States and its allies.

Saddam, 69, was sentenced to death by an Iraqi court for crimes against humanity committed during his regime which spanned more than two decades.

Earlier, in another function at his family's residence here, Najib presented 299 head of cattle to mosques and *surau* in his constituency to celebrate **Hari Raya Aidiladha** today.

DiGi Telecommunication provided 100 head of the cattle while Najib made a contribution of 12 head of cattle. The rest were from individuals.