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Najib: No more options, no more discussions

ULTIMATUM TO INTRUDERS: Surrender, time for negotiations is over, says prime minister

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KUALA LUMPUR

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday warned the intruders from southern Philippines that there was no more room for negotiations.

He said the intruders had no other option but to surrender or face the consequences.

"There is no other option, no other discussion, no other consideration, just surrender. We are resolute in this matter as what they committed is a very serious crime.

"First, they intruded into our country armed with weapons and, second, they have killed two members of our security forces and injured three more," he said after paying his last respects to the two Malaysian commandos at the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Subang yesterday.

However, Najib did not reveal the deadline for the intruders to surrender for tactical reasons.

On Friday morning, the stand-off between security forces and 180-odd Sulu intruders in Kampung Tanduo, Lahad Datu in Sabah turned bloody when a shoot-out ensued between both parties.

Police commandos Inspector Zulkifli Mamat and Corporal Sabarudin Daud, from the VAT 69 force, were killed while three others were injured.

Twelve of the intruders were also killed in the shootout which lasted 30 minutes.

Najib said he had spoken to Philippine President Benigno Aquino on Friday night and both leaders had an understanding that



Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, paying their last respects to the two commandos killed on Friday by intruders in Lahad Datu. Their remains arrived at the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Subang yesterday. With them is Mohamad Akmaruddin Zulkifli, son of Inspector Zulkifli Mamat, who was killed in the shoot-out. Pic by Mohd Yusni Ariffin

whatever happened next was unavoidable.

"I contacted President Aquino last night and told him that after the shooting, the government is taking the stand that the time to consider whatever request from the group has ended."

Najib said he was informed that the commandos had walked into a trap. "This information was confirmed by one VAT 69 member involved in the operation. Some of the intruders waved white flags so they (VAT 69 members) did not expect other intruders to open fire.

"I am not ruling out the possibility that what happened was a trap. If they indeed had set up a trap, this is a tactic used by cowards."

Najib said as consideration of their service and sacrifice for the country, the two policemen would be posthumously promoted. Zulkifli will be promoted to assistant superintendent and Sabarudin to sergeant.

"Their widows will receive higher pensions and other benefits."

Present to pay their final respects yesterday were Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Hajah Haminah, who gave a personal contribution to the families, the prime minister's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, and Deputy Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar.

Earlier, in Lahad Datu, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar said security forces would

end the stand-off immediately.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said the Sulu gunmen were surrounded by Malaysian security forces.

Page 1 pic: Trucks carrying soldiers proceeding yesterday to Kampung Tanduo, where a shoot-out occurred between security forces and intruders on Friday.

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Intruders ignore Aquino's appeal to give up

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MANILA: The Philippine president yesterday urged the intruders from Sulu to surrender.

President Benigno Aquino said they should leave immediately or would face prosecution at home on charges of triggering an armed conflict.

In a message to the group, Aquino said the clan members should "surrender now without conditions."

He said he had sought to avoid bloodshed from the beginning.

"However, you did not join us in this objective. Because of the path you have taken, what we have been trying to avoid has come to pass.

"If you have grievances, the path you chose was wrong. The just and, indeed, the only correct thing for you to do is to surrender."

The Filipino group is led by a brother of Sultan Jamalul Kiram III of the southern Philippine province of Sulu.

Jacel Kiram, a daughter of the sultan, indicated that her uncle, Agbimuddin Kiram, who is still in Lahad Datu, would not surrender.

"The decision remains the same. They will not return here because honour is above life," she told DZBB radio in Manila. "What is life without honour?"

Abraham Idjirani, a spokesman for the sultan, said he and the council of the sultanate still had to study Aquino's statement.

Idjirani said the sultan's brother was unharmed in Friday's clash. He said among those killed on the clan's side were a 33-year-old woman and her 18-year-old son. AP