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Najib: Act against culprits

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MILAN: The Indonesian government needs to take action against parties causing the haze problem which has not only affected the air quality of Malaysia but its economy as well, said Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak.

The prime minister said only Indonesia could take action against them to ensure and prove whether the haze is due to irresponsible plantation companies carrying out open burning or due to effects of weather change.

"They are operating there, we want Indonesia to take action, issuing summons is one thing but proving they conducted such acts is another.

"Only Indonesia alone can gather evidence and convict the companies concerned with whatever actions and secondly, I said whether the source of the act was due to the companies or spontaneous combustion from effects of changing weather," said Najib when asked on the worsening haze situation.

He said this to Malaysian journalists before departing home after a three-day working visit to Milan.

Najib said the solution to the haze problem needed the close cooperation of Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore to formulate more effective measures.

"It will take into consideration the agreement signed by the three countries to combat haze.

"Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia are still working on interpreting the agreement into a suitable form of action to ensure the matter does not recur," he said.

Meanwhile in Kuala Lumpur, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi wants Indonesia to give more serious commitment in combating haze as the problem is recurring every year.

He said despite the leadership and people of Indonesia appearing to be concerned on the situation, it was insufficient to resolve the issue. "In this regard, we would be very thankful if Indonesia would discuss with its partners in Asean on taking long term measures.

"We hope its commitment is not only on paper or mere statements pleasant to the ears, but through implementation which could end all haze problems," he said after launching a U-Turn programme here yesterday. - Bernama