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PM: Wasatiyyah is key to fighting Islamophobia

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PUTRAJAYA: Wasatiyyah or moderation is the key to combating issues like Islamophobia, liberalism and extremism, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said the Government believes the wasatiyyah approach is the most suitable way to deal with issues plaguing the Muslim world today.

"We are constantly shown a negative image of Islam through the world's mainstream media, in tel-

evision, and even in video games. Some say that Islamophobia is a US\$200mil industry.

"The case of *Charlie Hebdo* and the Prophet Muhammad caricatures have been defined in Europe as freedom of expression but freedom of expression should not be mistaken as a freedom to offend, incite violence and hatred. We cannot take the easy path and pin the blame on the enemies of Islam," he said.

"But it is important for us to reflect on the issues and challenges faced by Islam. Adopting extrem-

ist approaches and closed-minded views on certain issues will certainly paint a negative picture of Muslims in the eyes of others.

"It is even sadder when some Muslims endorse Western stereotypes by committing extremist acts which are against the true principles of Islam promoted by Prophet Muhammad, who is known for practising wasatiyyah," said Najib, at the "Friends of Wasatiyyah" gathering held at his residence here yesterday.

He also pointed out liberalism is a "threat" to Muslims as the phi-

losophy is damaging towards the identity of Islam.

"Liberals do not take religion and its principles seriously. As a result of liberalism, we now have Muslim liberals and also the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual community) among us.

"In order to deal with the disorder that comes from extremist and liberal thinking, the Government decided to adopt the wasatiyyah approach, which we believe is the most suitable in the current situation," he said.

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