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Be united, Muslims urged

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We must embody the spirit of the Hijrah, says Najib

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has appealed for unity among Muslims in Malaysia, urging them to cast aside their differences and seek common ground.

He said there were differences among Muslims but warned that Malaysia would be weakened if these were to lead to a rift within the *ummah* or community.

"Ideological differences must not cause animosity or a split among Muslims as it will lead to us losing our strength.

"What we need to do is embody the spirit of the Hijrah by Anding common ground and setting aside our differences of opinion because in the end, what's important is the Muslim *ummah* and Islam," Najib said in his speech at the national level Ma'al Hijrah celebration yesterday.

Malaysia's many successes, he said, could only be achieved with unity among the *ummah*.

"Malaysia has the ambition to become a developed country with Islam as the religion of its federation.

"We are a shining example to the Islamic world, so let's not allow this to be destroyed by those who are conspiring with others in or outside our country to destroy all we have achieved," he said.

Najib said this year's national Ma'al Hijrah theme, "Unity as the Pulse of the Country's Transformation", was relevant not just for Malaysia but for Muslims worldwide in view of the challenges they were facing.

He said that apart from Malaysia,



Inspiring personality: Najib (right) presenting the Tokoh Maal Hijrah to Abdul Hamid during the National Maal Hijrah Celebration at the National Mosque in Kuala Lumpur. Also at the event are Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia director-general Datuk Othman Mustapha (left) and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Jamil Khir Baharom.

which has offered to accept 3,000 Syrian refugees, few other Muslim countries could afford to extend a helping hand.

"We can do this because Malaysia is a peaceful and prosperous country," he said.

Najib said another reason why many Muslims were suffering today

was because they were being denied their rights.

Citing the Palestinians as an example, Najib said they were being "dehumanised" and subjugated by Israel to such an extent that they were no longer considered human beings by their occupiers.

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Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak

Palestinians is something we must defend," he said.

During the event held at Masjid Negara, former Chief Justice Tun Abdul Hamid Mohamad was announced as the National Ma'al Hijrah Personality for 2015.

Abdul Hamid, 73, received RM100,000, a certificate and a plaque from the Prime Minister.

Speaking to reporters later, Abdul Hamid urged Muslims to remain united.

"Malaysia is a modern Islamic country which is ahead of others in many areas such as Islamic finance, halal industry and democracy.

"As such, Muslims in our country must think ahead on how to increase the successes which can further develop our country," said Abdul Hamid, who was Chief Justice from 2007 to 2008.