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# 'OIC must focus on Southeast Asia'

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**FOR THE UMMAH:** Rohingya, south Thailand issues need attention, says Najib

ISTANBUL

**M**ALAYSIA has called on Turkey, as the new chair of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), to give attention to problems affecting Southeast Asia and bolster cooperation between member countries when dealing with threats of violence and extremism.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said issues, such as Ro-

hingya refugees, and conflicts in southern Thailand and the Philippines, required intervention from OIC to find a solution.

"I call on OIC, under the leadership of Turkey, to give attention to issues of security in the interest of Muslims.

"The situation in southern Philippines has caused spillover effects not only for Filipinos, but also Malaysians.

"If there is no security there,



TUAN ASRI  
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HUSSEIN

certainly, cases of kidnappings and border intrusions will continue to affect Malaysia," he told Malaysian journalists after his meeting with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the sidelines of the 13th OIC summit here yesterday.

The summit started yesterday, and was attended by 57 government leaders from OIC member

countries, who will meet to discuss current challenges faced by Muslims worldwide, such as the Palestinian conflict, the rise of Islamophobia and the threats brought on by extremism.

Najib said the issue of Rohingyas, for example, was no longer the domestic problem of Myanmar, as its repercussions were being felt by Malaysia.

Malaysia has taken in some 60,000 Rohingya refugees.

"As long as this problem is not given due attention by the Myanmar government, nor a long-term solution found, the situation will continue to be a humanitarian issue.

"This is also a problem faced by

the ummah. OIC needs to champion this issue," said Najib.

He said the conflict in southern Thailand, in which Malaysia mediated the peace process, required the involvement of OIC for it to be resolved diplomatically.

On another note, Najib said he expressed the nation's sympathy to Erdogan over the recent bombing attacks in Ankara and here, and that they had agreed to step up cooperation to manage violence and extremism.

"Both leaders agreed that the threat (of violence) was serious and that it demanded stronger cooperation, especially in exchanging intelligence and leads."