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PM: Terror acts prove the need for security laws

PROTECTION: NSC Act deliberately misinterpreted, says Najib

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has called for greater action against terrorism.

He said the latest terrorist attacks worldwide demonstrated that the threat was real and growing.

"Hardly a day goes by without another atrocity. We are far from immune in Malaysia, as the first Daesh (Islamic State) attack on us last month showed," he said here yesterday.

He said this was the reason the government introduced the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act, the Special Measures against Terrorism in Foreign Countries Act, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the National Security Council (NSC) Act.

"We were criticised for passing these laws, including by some who fear-mongered for political reasons."

He said the NSC Act, in particular,

had been deliberately misinterpreted.

Najib said it was not the same as a declaration of national emergency — that power remains with the Yang di-Pertuan Agong — and Parliament remains sitting with oversight on any security area declared.

The NSC Act, which comes into effect on Monday, was passed by Parliament last December.

It seeks to strengthen the coordination of intelligence, establish a swift response mechanism, and if it is in the interests of national security, to enable the establishment of a security area for six months — such as was necessary, for example, following the invasion of Malaysian territory at Lahad Datu in 2013.

NSC comprises eight members, at least five of whom must be present to constitute a quorum at any meeting of the council. The council has existed since 1971. The new act places the NSC on a statutory basis for the first time.

As NSC chairman, the prime minister may revoke the declaration of a security area at any time during the six-month period.

The law also contains provisions for the protection of civilians and their property as and when they are covered by the establishment of a security area, and also sets limits on the actions of the security forces during that time.

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BIRTHDAY TREAT

Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** cutting his birthday cake during the Hari Raya open house at the police training centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday night. With him are Inspector-General of Police **Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar** (left) and Deputy Inspector-General of Police **Tan Sri Noor Rashid Ibrahim** (second from left). Najib's 63rd birthday was last Saturday. Pic by Aizuddin Saad

Security forces operating in any declared security area are subject to the instructions and directives that are issued for the operation.

While conducting the operation, the security forces also remain subject to the laws that govern them.

"My government will never apologise for placing the safety and security of the people first. These laws are necessary, and other countries have since followed our lead," Najib said.

He assured Malaysians that the government would continue to

protect them.

"Daesh and its cruel, perverted ideology have no place in Islam, nor in our peaceful, diverse and tolerant country.

"Now is the time for us to unite and play an even greater part in the fight against terrorism."