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BILATERAL TIES

# All diplomats posted here must respect our laws, says Najib

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Diplomats must be respectful of their host countries, and this is no different in Malaysia.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said yesterday any diplomat posted here must respect the country and its laws.

“(It was) based on this principle (that) we have taken action to declare (North Korean ambassador to Malaysia) Kang Chol persona non grata,” he said at the lobby of Parliament after the opening of the Dewan Rakyat by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Muhammad V.

Kang had made a number of disparaging remarks about Malaysia and its authorities in their handling of investigations into the assassination of Kim Jong-nam, the exiled half-brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.

On Saturday, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman had declared Kang persona non grata and gave him 48 hours to leave the country after failing to meet the ministry’s deputy secretary-general for bilateral affairs, Raja Nushirwan Zainal Abidin.

Anifah had also said that Wisma Putra had demanded a written apology from North Korea for the accusations made by Kang. After four days, no such apology was offered. This led to the government declaring him persona non grata.

Najib said Kang should have apologised and retracted his accusations as a matter of principle.

He said the government would wait for new developments with regards to its future diplomatic relations with North Korea.

“We will see... we will take it one step at the time,” he said.

On whether he expected an apology from North Korea, Najib said: “We are not getting anything. I do not expect anything from them.”

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said Malaysia had sent a clear message to North Korea that diplomatic relations must be respected.

“Malaysia should view this matter not only in respect to diplomatic ties but that relations between two countries need to be defended and respected. I would

like to reiterate that there is no hidden agenda with regards to our actions (in Jong-nam’s case),” he said.

Zahid said Malaysian police had conducted their investigation into the case professionally without linking the murder to any country.

“Our police have sufficient expertise to conduct interrogations,” he said.

He said expelling an ambassador was a rare move in diplomatic relations but Kang had failed to apologise to Malaysia for his accusations.

“Instead, (he) made criticisms which have had an impact on the perception of our country,” he said.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said the decision to expel Kang was based on the country’s laws and to protect the nation’s sovereignty.

“I believe the world knows what we have done is right. Other sovereign countries, if they were in our position, would have taken the same stance and made the same decision,” he said.

Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican said the government had acted in compliance with international and domestic laws in the handling of Jong-nam’s murder and the decision to kick Kang out of the country.

“All I can say is that our relations with North Korea have been affected and things will not be the same again.”

>> *Commentary by Datuk Seri Anifah Aman on Page 16*



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**DATUK SERI HISHAMMUDDIN HUSSEIN**  
Defence minister