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# Najib: We should not let such a crime happen again

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** "I was furious after reading the news. My emotions boiled to learn that a child, who was supposed to be showered with love, was treated (abused to death) that way."

Those were the words of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who expressed abhorrence at violence towards children, as he cited a case in which a 2-year-old boy died at the hands of his mother's boyfriend in Sungai Petani in November last year.

Najib, who was addressing an audience of 3,000 at the launch of the "Stop It!: Child Sex Crimes" seminar at the Putra World Trade Centre here yesterday, said no child should suffer such a

heinous crime.

"We should not let such a crime happen again. It is our responsibility to stop it. I want to stress here that on behalf of the government, we will not tolerate sexual exploitation of children. We will continue with our efforts to stop this violent crime."

He cited another case, in which an 8-year-old girl was raped by her stepfather. Najib said the girl was threatened with physical abuse to not reveal what happened to others.

"The victim should have been protected. She was not only raped, but was also beaten and hurt other than being threatened to keep the incident a secret.

However, her school (teachers) realised her change in behaviour and (upon investigation) alerted the authorities.

"As a civilised society, we cannot imagine how a father could commit such a heinous crime."

Najib said the short- and long-term effects of such crimes were traumatic.

"In the short term, children will suffer from psychological damage, disruption in emotional development, depression, a lack of appetite, sleep deprivation, post-traumatic stress disorder and fear, as well as effects to the genitals, sexually transmitted disease or pregnancy.

"In the long term, the children

will develop anti-social behaviour, stemming from the horrifying incident, which can lead to them being vengeful, suffer from sexual trauma and sexual addiction apart from learning and communication problems."

Najib said one of the challenges in eradicating such crimes was identifying paedophiles.

"We saw this in the case of Richard Huckle from the United Kingdom, who was found guilty of committing sex crimes against children in Malaysia. We are facing a tough challenge in identifying them (sex predators), whom we consider wolves in sheep's clothing."

Najib also warned participants

of the dangers of the "dark web", which hosts websites related to child pornography, especially through peer-to-peer networks.

"(The dark web) posed a difficulty to the authorities in detecting offenders. Some use social media for sexual grooming, where they gain the trust of children before manipulating them."

Najib advised parents to constantly monitor their children to prevent them from falling prey to sex offenders.

"Firstly, we must find ways to connect with our children.

"Secondly, we must educate our children on (what is an) 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' touch."