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# PM: We believe in spirit of consensus

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It is now up to Speaker to decide whether to table Bill in the Dewan Rakyat, says Najib

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Government will not take over the Private Member's Bill to amend the Syariah Courts (Criminal Jurisdiction) Act or RUU355 - in line with the principle of consensus in Barisan Nasional, says Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

The Prime Minister added that the Bill would remain a Private Member's Bill if it is presented in the Dewan Rakyat.

"This is in line with Barisan's practice of deciding issues based on consensus.

"It will be up to the (Dewan Rakyat) Speaker to decide based on the Order Paper," he added.

"If the Speaker decides to table it, then it will be tabled. He will also decide on the rules relating to the Bill," Najib said after chairing the Barisan supreme council meeting here last night.

Najib, who is Barisan chairman, said that in any case, the Government would not table the proposed amendments or change its policy of consensus among Barisan component parties.

Asked if this meant that Barisan would not support the Bill if it were to be tabled by PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang, Najib said this would depend on the

Speaker's ruling.

"We will take it from there. In Barisan, there is no consensus on RUU355," he explained.

On whether this meant that Barisan lawmakers were free to choose to support or reject the Bill according to their conscience if it was taken to a vote, the Prime Minister said:

"It will depend on the Speaker's ruling. There may or may not be a vote. It is up to the Speaker to decide."

Asked if Umno was disappointed by the lack of consensus on the issue, Najib said: "No, we all believe in the

spirit and principle of consensus. That is how Barisan works.

"And we will continue on this basis because that is the principle that Barisan is founded upon," he added.

The Bill was tabled by Abdul Hadi to seek amendments to grant the Syariah court powers to impose stiffer penalties on all crimes except those with the death sentence.

Following fierce debates among lawmakers, Abdul Hadi then presented a tweaked version of the motion in November and sought to defer it to be debated at the current Parliament meeting.

**And we will continue on this basis (spirit of consensus) because that is the principle that Barisan is founded upon.**

Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak