

Najib Thanks Britain For Helping Ashraf Haziq
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 29 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has expressed appreciation to the people of Britain for helping Malaysian student Ashraf Haziq who was beaten up and robbed by thugs who initially pretended to help him during the London riots early this month.

"Thank you for helping a young Malaysian in his hour of need, and thank you for proving once again, that London is a city where outsiders are welcome but extremists are not," he said in an article in The Times today.

Najib said, in Malaysia, this incident was so senseless, so callous and so brutal which shocked Malaysians to the core.

"Many of us have spent time in your city and have a great affection for it, but this was a side to London that none of us had seen before and we began to wonder if it had changed, if our memories had become tinted with nostalgia, or even if we were mistaken in the first place," he said.

But, he said, in the days that followed, Britain showed its true face to the world as tens of thousands of people in Britain took to the internet to express their revulsion at what they had seen.

"This wave of anger was followed by a huge outpouring of concern, assistance and support. In an age where some still try to drive wedges between races and religions, the ordinary people of Britain did not hesitate to open their hearts to a young Malaysian Muslim," he said.

Najib said, Ashraf himself also went on to make clear that the feeling was mutual, demonstrating an admirable refusal to judge as he told the world that he loved London, that nothing would persuade him to leave it early and that he even felt sorry for his attackers.

The prime minister said that at the United Nations last year, he had called on world leaders to fight extremism of all kinds by establishing a global 'Movement of the Moderates' -- ordinary people of all races, religions and political persuasions prepared to stand up to the extremists and defend the values they believed in.

"It is those values, an acceptance of others, a strong sense of right and wrong and above all, a rejection of extreme and violent behaviour, that have been defended so vigorously by the people of Britain in recent weeks.

"What we have seen is a truly heartening example of the moderates finding their voice, and I want to say, quite simply -- thank you," he said.

Ashraf, 20, became the global face of the riots that rocked London and the British nation as millions watched in disgust as a YouTube revealed the horror of a young Malaysian student being robbed and left him bleeding by the roadside after breaking his jaw and then stealing his bike.

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