

**Consensus Safeguards Islamic Interests, Says Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 19 (Bernama) -- Consensus between the government and Islamic scholars, intellectuals and virtual writers serves to safeguard the interests and dignity of Islam in the country, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today.

The prime minister said these three groups of people should be sensitive to current developments and changes in government policy so as to be able to disseminate information with accuracy and credibility.

They should cooperate among themselves and with the government to screen all information and filter malicious accusations and slander hurled by irresponsible people for their vested interests, he said.

"The consensus between the three groups and the government will serve to safeguard the interests and dignity of Islam," he said when closing a national gathering of Islamic scholars, intellectuals and virtual writers at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

The two-day maiden gathering carried the theme "Consensus Transforms the Ummah".

Najib said the participation of the three groups is most important in the context of current challenges, whereby they can set right information on the government agenda or policies which are often manipulated for political interests.

Remaining silent or not wanting to intervene or act can result in dire consequences for Muslims and the position of Islam itself, he said.

The prime minister said that in Islam, politics is a "jihad" (struggle) which should be given priority and one that cannot be separated from the struggle to uphold Islam and champion the interests of Muslims.

"If politics is viewed through this dimension, it becomes a discipline that is closely associated with the role of man on this earth, as the caliphs of God.

"Hence, the struggle to disseminate the truth and uphold Islam, either by way of writing or speech, should sprout from good faith and trust with truthful and accurate information that does not confuse listeners," he said.

He said that such a struggle would strengthen the unity of the ummah and elevate Islam in the eyes of followers of other religions.

Acknowledging that it is difficult to restrain the information technology revolution, Najib said it is of utmost importance to strengthen collaboration among the three groups to enable them serve as disseminators of information and as a bulwark against the social media "virus" which uses the facility to spread information for certain social and political purposes.

He said a phenomenon arising out of the use of the social media is that an issue can become viral very quickly compared to the flying letters which were the norm at one time.

"The IT revolution is something that we cannot dismiss. We have no option though. If we choose to shackle the country or Muslims from this development, it will be something just impossible to do.

"Therefore, in facing the borderless cyber world, collaboration among the three groups is of most importance so that we can act swiftly to stop the dissemination of false information that can reach anyone at all," he said.

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