

**Najib Departs For New York**  
**Bernama**  
**May 16, 2012**  
**From Nor Faridah Abd Rashid**

LONDON, May 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak departed for New York from the Farnborough Airport Tuesday night for a four-day working visit.

He was in the United Kingdom for a two-day working visit.

About three hours before he left, Najib attended a reception hosted by Prince Charles in conjunction with the granting of the Royal Charter Award to the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (OCIS).

Among other guests from Malaysia were the Raja Muda of Perak Raja Dr Nazrin Shah, who is a trustee of OCIS, Tun Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid also as trustee, Datuk Dr Afifi Alkiti who is a fellow at the centre and Tuanku Raja Zarith Sofiah Al-Marhum Sultan Idris Shah.

The prime minister is a member of the high council while Prince Charles is the patron.

Royal Charters are granted by the Sovereign on the advice of the Privy Council. The practice dates back to the 13th century.

They are now normally granted only to bodies that work in the public interest and which can demonstrate pre-eminence, stability, permanence and a strong record of achievement in their particular field. The University of Oxford, and many of the Oxford Colleges, are similarly incorporated.

The Conferment of the Royal Charter to the OCIS is significant as it marks the first time an Islamic institution in the United Kingdom (UK) is conferred with such a prestigious status since such Charters were granted by successive Sovereigns from 1231.

According to Najib, Malaysia had made significant financial and material contributions to the centre.

"We believe we need to project the real image of Islam and Malaysia's success as a progressive and modern Muslim country as well as looking after the rights of the non-Muslims is a very good model for us to demonstrate. The Oxford Centre allows us to do so," he told the Malaysian media here.

Najib, who was invited by Prince Charles to attend the event, considered the invitation as a recognition and honour for Malaysia.

The Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies is a Recognised Independent Centre of the University of Oxford.

Founded in 1985, it encourages through research, teaching and publication a better understanding of the culture and civilisation of Islam and contemporary Muslim societies.

Fellows of the Centre teach in a number of faculties across the University. Its Visiting Fellowship and Scholarship programmes have brought scholars to Oxford from almost 50 countries.

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Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsindex.php?id=666462>