

Najib expressed 'disappointment' in Obama's backing for same-sex marriage
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, June 28 – Datuk Seri Najib Razak had told the United States government last month that he was “disappointed” in President Barack Obama’s support for same-sex marriages, Putrajaya has revealed.

The Foreign Affairs Ministry said in a written reply to Parliament yesterday that the prime minister had conveyed the message to US deputy secretary of state James B. Steinberg during his visit to Washington D.C. in mid-May.

“The prime minister also asserted to the US government that religious laws are principles that should be respected and followed, regarding social issues deemed sensitive by faith followers, who form the majority in the US as well as Malaysia,” the ministry said in its reply.

It was responding to a question from Muhammad Husain (PAS-Pasir Puteh), who had asked if the government planned to officially record its protest to Obama’s recent statement in support of marriages among those in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community, the first such declaration made by a sitting president of the US.

Malaysia will continue to stick by its stand and view on this issue whenever it meets for discussions with the US.”

The ministry however acknowledged that Obama's statement was the US president's personal stand on the matter and only applies to the US.

"In principle, the Malaysian government does not interfere in the domestic affairs of foreign nations due to several factors, including the different value system practised by Malaysians.

"As such, it is not necessary for the Malaysian government to protest the US president's view, which was made in the context of his country's social issues," the ministry said.

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The ministry added that Malaysia would neither "tolerate nor cooperate" with any party whether within or outside the country on the issue of LGBT and the community's rights.

"The Malaysian government stand was made clear when we prohibited the recently planned LGBT protest by groups insensitive to the religious and cultural practices of our local communities," it said.

Malaysia shares the same view with other OIC (Organisation of Islamic Cooperation) countries regarding LGBT issues, sexual orientation, as well as gender identities, the ministry added.

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