

Najib Pays Tribute To Armed Forces
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 8 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has paid tribute to the Malaysian Armed Forces for defending and preserving peace in the country and for services rendered as peacekeepers in strife-torn countries.

The prime minister said their services proved invaluable to Malaysia and its citizens.

"As we celebrate yet another year of independence, I wish to extend my thanks to all the dutiful Malaysians in the armed forces who not only preserve the peace, but also lend a helping hand in every day matters such as the construction of roads in rural areas through the 'Jiwa Murni' project.

"Yours is truly a noble profession, and always know that you are in our thoughts while you serve your country," he said in his latest entry in www.1malaysia.com.

He said in recognition of their sacrifice, the government had on the recent Warrior's Day celebration, launched the 1Malaysia Privilege Card for soldiers and policemen which would enable them to enjoy discounts on products and services from about 20 participating companies.

"It is a small measure of recognition for the sacrifices they have made for our country, but I felt that at the very least, it would lighten their daily burdens," he said.

Najib noted that the Malaysian Armed Forces, which first came into being during the British colonial period with their first duty to fight communist insurgents, had ever since been integral in protecting the interests of Malaysia as well as other nations.

He said that Malaysia's armed forces first overseas peacekeeping mission was in the Republic of Congo and to date, Malaysia had deployed more than 20,000 soldiers as well as 1,000 policemen to peace missions around the globe, where in the process, 28 perished while on duty.

He added that the Malaysian Armed Forces had also earned themselves a shining reputation for their work in Somalia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Timor Leste, Western Sahara, Namibia and Lebanon.

"And we continue to break new ground. In 2010, the Malaysian Contingent International Security Assistance Force (MALCON ISAF) arrived in central Afghanistan on a humanitarian mission, providing healthcare, education and medicines in the midst of harsh conditions.

"More recently, our armed forces have been active in Lebanon with Malcoy 8, a team of our finest 200 and a 540-strong Malaysian Battalion (Malbatt 4).

"Lebanon is our largest peacekeeping mission to date, a fact that has not gone unnoticed by the world. It serves as proof of Malaysia's commitment towards the international community," he said.

Meanwhile, he said the government would continue to help boost the capacity and capabilities of the police to enable them to perform their duties effectively and efficiently in keeping peace within.

"As the society's needs evolve, the police force must also evolve to meet new needs and assure the public of their safety.

"Facilities and command centres have been revamped in order to better monitor the situation on the ground and attempt to decrease response times," he said, adding that continuous improvements were made to the police force.

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