

Changing the flag a heinous act, says PM
Malaysian Insider
September 20, 2012
By Hafidz Baharom

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 20 — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today branded the changing of the national flag as a heinous act since it symbolised a nation's purity and sovereignty.

Najib, responding to a question from reporters after the Umno Supreme Council meeting here today, said that the matter would be left to authorities for further action.

"We see the flag as a symbol of purity and sovereignty of a country.

We harshly condemn anyone involved in such acts," he said.

Mohd Zairi Shafa'ai and Muhammad Nasir Abu Bakar, both 24, courted controversy during Merdeka Day eve when they raised the Sang Saka Malaya flag, the pre-independence nationalist banner that served as the model for the flags of Umno, Indonesia and Singapore.

Both youths were arrested earlier this month and are being investigated under Section 9(1) of the Sedition Act 1948, a British-enacted law that the Najib administration recently said it will soon repeal.

Najib (picture), who is also Umno President, said what was important here was that the people themselves showed that the act was totally unacceptable.

"Because the flag is tied to the pride of a nation. It is not something to fool around with by anyone," he added.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishamuddin Hussein told reporters that the police investigation into the matter had been concluded and passed to the Attorney General for further action.

"The report has been sent to the Attorney General for further action, along with the report on those who stomped on the portraits," he said.

He added that there was legal action taken against those who insulted the Jalur Gemilang in the past.

"The Home Ministry will not comment on this matter as we will leave it for the Attorney General to take action and the courts to decide on the matter," Hishamuddin said.

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