

**Lahad Datu Terrorist Intrusion A Wake-Up Call For Malaysia - Najib  
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 12 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has described the intrusion by Sulu terrorists in Lahad Datu as a wake-up call not only for the government but also for the people especially in Sabah on the need to be better prepared to face external threats.

Saying that the government would not take security for granted, the prime minister said no effort would be spared to ensure that the security forces were well-trained, well-equipped and prepared to deal with incidents of this nature.

"I think we've gone through a long phase of peace and stability in Malaysia. The communist (terrorists) laid down their arms in 1989 and since then it has been a long period of peace and stability in Malaysia.

"That (attack on Lahad Datu and Semporna) is an external threat and we must deal with it. So, when we decide to spend on defence and security, people should not question it.

"They should see it as protecting our security, sovereignty and territorial integrity," Najib said on the "Conversation with the PM" programme aired on TV3 Tuesday night.

Stressing that the government would not compromise when it came to Malaysia's security, sovereignty and territorial integrity, Najib said: "We must do whatever we can to ensure that Malaysians anywhere, in any part of Malaysia, feel secure, safe and their future safeguarded by the government."

Malaysian security forces launched the 'Operasi Daulat' offensive on March 5 after the Sulu terrorists killed eight policemen in Kampung Tanduo near Lahad Datu and Kampung Simunul in Semporna on March 1 and 2.

The terrorists had holed up in Kampung Tanduo since Feb 12 and ignored the government's attempt to negotiate their surrender. So far, 54 militants have been killed and about 100 people detained for suspected links with the gunmen.

Commenting further, Najib stressed that ensuring security should not be the sole responsibility of security forces and the government as Malaysians too had a role to play, including in terms of supporting the government.

He also highlighted the fact that Malaysia had adequate capabilities and assets to safeguard its security.

"I think that in terms of dealing with the armed intrusion, we certainly have the assets but, as I said, this is a wake-up call, where there are gaps in terms of our capabilities; we hope that we'll be able to close the gap," Najib said.

Observing that Sabah's eastern seaboard spanned over 1,000 kilometres, he said the state presented "a huge challenge" in the area of security, which needed to be tightened up.

"We certainly need to put more assets and a better surveillance system (there)," he said.

During his recent visit to Lahad Datu, Najib had announced the establishment of a special security area running from Kudat to Tawau -- around 1,400 km in length -- with a view to safeguarding the sovereignty and security of Sabah's east coast.

He was also queried on claims by foreign media that the Sulu terrorists had been instigated by certain groups in the Philippines, including those opposed to its president.

He responded: "When I spoke to President (Benigno) Aquino, he told me that they'll begin their investigations. He actually made some very interesting remarks, that these people are quite poor people.

"They certainly don't have the means to launch such an operation against Malaysia and, therefore, he thinks that they are funded from somewhere," he said.

"That appears to be a very strong suspicion but we need to investigate," Najib said, adding that sufficient evidence was needed "before we point a finger at anyone".

On whether the terrorist intrusion in Lahad Datu would affect efforts by Malaysia in facilitating the peace process in the southern Philippines, Najib said these were separate issues as the peace process involved the Philippine government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF).

Najib said the case of the terrorists in Lahad Datu was quite different from that of the MILF; the terrorists were making outlandish claims that were not recognised by the Malaysian government.

"Therefore, they resorted to violence and that was unfortunate, but we will deal with it in a way that we think is appropriate," he added.

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