

**Najib Lauds Bravery Of Armed Forces Personnel**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, March 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has paid tribute to members of the Armed Forces (ATM) for "putting their lives before ours" in protecting Malaysian interests.

Najib said this on his Facebook page as Malaysian security personnel including those from the ATM are carrying out an operation to flush out Sulu terrorists in Lahad Datu, Sabah.

The posting alluded to his meeting in Putrajaya last night with retired ATM senior officers whom he described as "brave men with various accomplishments towards protecting their country".

More than 200 senior ex-servicemen were in attendance at the event at Najib's official residence, Sri Perdana.

"Their tasks now lie on the shoulders of men no less brave who now fight for us in Lahad Datu.

"Spanning generations, the ATM have put their lives before ours to protect Malaysia's interests," he said.

In this regard, Najib called on all Malaysians to appreciate their efforts and support them in any way they could.

Meanwhile, in his latest tweet, Najib urged Malaysians to stand by security forces in their struggle.

"Through your day, remember what our security forces go through in theirs. Show them your empathy and stand by them in (their) struggles. They need your support," he said.

Malaysian security forces launched an offensive on a band of Sulu terrorists on March 5, after a series of negotiations proved futile since their intrusion into Lahad Datu on Feb 12.

Since the conflict began, nine members of the security forces comprising eight policemen and a soldier have been killed in firefights with the militant group.

Another soldier was killed in a road mishap involving an army truck in a convoy for 'Operasi Daulat', the code name for the offensive.

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