

Najib: All-out action will now be taken against the intruders
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PEKAN: Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said he was saddened by the deaths in the shootout at Tanduo village in Lahad Datu, because there had been bloodshed despite the Government's attempts to prevent it.

Expressing his sadness over the deaths of two police commandos who were killed and the three who were injured, the Prime Minister said the group of Sulu gunmen had opened fire at the security forces.

He said that with the deadline for them to leave now over, all-out action would be taken against the intruders, who had caused the deaths of the policemen.

"I have given the full mandate to Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar and Armed Forces Chief Tan Sri Zulkefli Mohd Zin to take whatever action is deemed necessary," he told a press conference.

"They have been given full powers. It is up to them and the ground commanders can take action.

"There will be no compromise; either they surrender or face the consequences."

Najib said security had been strengthened and the intruders totally surrounded, adding that vessels of the Royal Malaysian Navy were patrolling the sea to prevent them from escaping.

"What is important now is that whatever means must be used to cripple the group," he added.

Najib said he had received reports that 12 people from the armed group were also killed in the exchange of fire.

He said the Philippine authorities would be informed of the latest developments.

In Kuala Lumpur, Home Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said the security forces had done all that was necessary to prevent bloodshed in Lahad Datu.

"They did everything to ensure that the standoff was resolved in the best manner, giving time for negotiations and diplomacy with the Philippine Government to avoid bloodshed.

"It's taken days for us to do this. There is a limit to what we are doing. No one should accuse the authorities of not giving as much space and time to solve this peacefully without bloodshed," he told reporters after receiving a Malaysia-Palestine Youth Movement delegation's visit to the Malaysia Civil Defence headquarters.

Hishammuddin said the Philippine Government had already said that it wanted those involved to return to the Philippines.

"What is important now is to let the security forces run their operations," he said.

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