

Najib tells Sabahans only BN can defend state
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 23 – Datuk Seri Najib Razak has suggested the opposition was involved in the recent Sulu incursion into Sabah, and urged voters in the state to defend their sovereignty against Pakatan Rakyat (PR).

On the stump today in Bongowan some 70 kilometres from the state capital Kota Kinabalu, the Barisan Nasional (BN) chief said the opposition must be rejected for questioning the integrity of security forces during the incursion of Lahad Datu.

“Even until today, they have kept quiet about their suspicious (overseas) meetings. Who they met we do not know,” The Star Online quoted him as saying in a speech while on the hustings in the state.

“Sabahans should make a statement in no uncertain terms on May 5. This (Sabah’s sovereignty) must be defended for it is bigger than the question of development, greater than bitumen roads that had been constructed.

“It’s not about seats (constituencies), but the question of Sabah’s dignity and sovereignty within Malaysia which the BN has promised to defend even with our lives,” national news agency Bernama quoted Najib (picture) as saying.

A group of over 200 gunmen, claiming to be the “royal army” of the Sulu Sultanate, landed in Lahad Datu on February 9 to lay claim over Sabah, using the loosely guarded 40-minute sea passage between the Philippine Muslim south and the coastal district in northern Sabah.

Their landing has resulted in nearly scores of deaths, including eight policemen and two soldiers, and forced thousands of villagers out of their homes in remote areas of the eastern-most Malaysian state.

Amid the violence, Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim found himself the centre of allegations linking him to Filipino rebel leader Nur Misuari, the founder of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

According to the allegations, the incursion was linked to the opposition’s campaign to award autonomy to Sabah should it win in Election 2013.

The claims surfaced early last month when Umno-owned Malay daily Utusan Malaysia and TV3 both picked up a news report from the Philippine Daily Inquirer, titled “Philippine govt intel eyes 3 groups abetting Sulu sultan’s claim”.

The Philippine news report had cited unnamed intelligence sources there when reporting that the Malaysian opposition here was allegedly one of three groups that could have backed the Sulu rebels’ claim on Sabah.

It said that a Philippine intelligence officer pointed to an unnamed individual from the opposition allied to Anwar, adding that the figure was looking to contest a Sabah seat in Election 2013.

Utusan also cited a February 14 report from newswire Reuters, where a Philippine military officer reportedly said a Malaysian opposition politician had invited the Sulu men to discuss land matters.

Anwar has since filed a RM100 million defamation suit against the daily and TV3.

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