

**Najib Presents National Sovereignty Medal To Media Practitioners  
Bernama  
2 Aug, 2013**

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 2 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak Friday presented the Pingat Kedaulatan Negara (PKN) or National Sovereignty Medal to 227 media practitioners who covered the armed intrusion in Lahad Datu, Sabah, earlier this year.

The award ceremony was held in conjunction with a breaking-of-fast organised by the Information Department and the Prime Minister's Department at Seri Perdana, the official residence of the prime minister.

Communication and Multimedia Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek and Deputy Home Minister Datuk Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar attended the event.

Also present were Malaysian National News Agency (Bernama) Chairman Datuk Abdul Rahman Sulaiman; Bernama General Manager Datuk Yong Soo Heong and Bernama Editor-in-Chief Datuk Zulkefli Salleh as well as the chief editors of several other media organisations.

Seventeen media personnel from Bernama received the medal. More than 1,000 media practitioners attended the event.

Najib, in his speech before the breaking-of-fast, said the government decided to award the medal because the media practitioners sent to cover the intrusion in Lahad Datu and Semporna were exposed to a high risk.

"An important factor is the channelling of accurate and authentic information by the media to the people. In the Vietnam War, the United States had the latest technology but it lost the war because it did not have the support of the people.

"It was different in the case of Malaysia. The country humbled the communist insurgency and won over the hearts and minds of the people, enabling the government to garner the strong support of the people," he said.

Najib said Malaysians must be united in facing any threat from within and outside the country and added that he saw a high level of patriotism in the people as displayed during the recent Warriors Day event held in the federal capital.

Najib said articles in the print, electronic and social media had united Malaysians and kindled in them the spirit of nationalism, and this resulted in many Malaysians making contributions which swelled the Lahad Datu Fund.

The media practitioners who received the medal are those who had registered at the media centre run by the Information Department at Felda Residence Sahabat in Lahad Datu between Feb 15 and April 15 this year.

The media centre facilitated the media practitioners' coverage of the intrusion, analyses of local and international media reports, parrying of negative foreign media reports and usage of an effective media approach to disseminate information to the public.

The award of the medal is in appreciation of the contributions and services of all quarters,

including media practitioners who helped to disseminate transparent and accurate information during the 'Operasi Daulat' (Op Daulat) in Lahad Datu.

The media coverage had helped greatly in disseminating up-to-date information to the public in the battle against the intrusion which had jeopardised national security and peace.

On March 5, security forces comprising Malaysian Armed Forces and Royal Malaysia Police personnel launched the Op Daulat offensive to fight off the intrusion through a Blue Ocean strategy after three weeks of negotiations failed.

The offensive resulted in 68 terrorists killed and 173 people detained under the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 and 443 others held for various other offences.

Eight policemen and two soldiers were killed in the incident.

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Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=968011>