

**Remain United To Defend Sovereignty - Najib  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak has called on the people to remain united to defend the sovereignty of Malaysia which has gained independence and free from the clutches of colonialism for decades.

In his message in conjunction with the 56th anniversary of the country's independence Saturday, the Prime Minister pointed out that now was not the time for Malaysians to be disunited.

"Whatever challenges there are, we must not be despaired. On the other hand, we must move forward to develop the country based on national solidarity," said Najib when delivering the message which was aired by local television stations Friday night.

He said that being a sovereign nation, the people of Malaysia had full rights in all matters pertaining to the administration of the country and decide for themselves the direction the country was heading for.

"In fact, in animating the independence and the incidents involved in attaining it, we must also continue to preserve and defend matters pertaining to the Malay Rulers, the position of the Islamic religion as well as the special privileges of the Malays and Bumiputeras as had been enshrined by our forefathers in the Federal Constitution," he said.

The Independence Day parade this year with the theme 'Malaysiaku Berdaulat: Tanah Tumpahnya Darahku' ('My Sovereign Malaysia: My Native Land') will be held at the Merdeka Square, here tomorrow, with the climax being the Merdeka Eve 2013 programme just before midnight to usher the arrival of Aug 31 scheduled to be held at the Pusat Maritim, Putrajaya tonight.

Subsequently, Najib took the opportunity to remind the people that sovereignty as a factor that buttressed Malaysia's independence did not come on a silver platter.

"Too much sweat had been shed, too much blood had been sacrificed. All these were due to the struggles of the leaders together with that of the past generation, and continued until today," he said.

Thus, Najib said, the Merdeka celebration was not merely to shout to evoke the people's spirits because even more than that, it must be interspersed with a sense of deep appreciation.

"What is even more important is the developments that came with independence, it has been proven that we have gone through episodes such as racial disputes, financial crises and political differences. Thankfully, we have overcome all these with much success," said the Prime Minister.

Najib said the main thing to be looked into in achieving the meaning of the Merdeka anniversary was to what extent would the present development attained by Malaysia be passed on to the future generation.

He said various efforts must be mobilised and put into place so that the young generation,

regardless of their religious background, race or culture would become literate in terms of history.

The Prime Minister said the young generation must continue to be guided and prepared in terms of their identity and strengthened with their patriotic spirit.

"Only then would Malaysia with its high-minded people remain as a sovereign nation in its real meaning," he said.

Referring to the armed intrusion incident in Lahad Datu, Sabah recently, Najib said the bloody incident was a lesson that Malaysia was not spared from exposure to external threat.

"The tragic incident proves to be a stark reminder to Malaysians on the importance of remaining united for the sake of defending the country's sovereignty," he said, adding that continued efforts must be made to develop a national identity and spirit of patriotism among the people, especially the future generation.

Najib also called on the people to take as a lesson the internal crises brewing up in several Arab nations that seemed to be endless.

"That's what happens when the changes aspired by the people were merely reckless transformation," said the Prime Minister, adding that there would be economic destruction and the growth of a particular country would be affected when there were no stability and unity.

As such, he called on Malaysians to appreciate peace, preserve harmony and nurture solidarity with patriotism.

Najib said that Malaysia's current status had been developed through various initiatives, careful planning and strategy by the government for decades according to its own mould and style.

Referring to Malaysia as a nation of various races that has made the country unique in the world, he said: "This uniqueness has made us special and an asset that will help us to achieve the developed nation status with high income in the next few years."

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