

**Moderation will help stop extremists, Najib tells UN General Assembly**  
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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak warned the United Nations General Assembly today that extremism poses a grave threat to Muslims worldwide.

The prime minister noted that conflicts and acts of violence, particularly between Sunni and Shia, were tearing communities apart.

"I believe that peace-loving Muslims – the overwhelming majority of Muslims – should unite against the extremists who use our religion as an excuse to commit violence," he said, adding that a "battle (is) being waged for the future of Islam".

"By reaffirming our commitment to moderation – and solving the political problems that drive instability – we can seize back the centre ground. We can marginalise the extremists. And we can advance an agenda for peace, harmony and justice".

Najib went on to say: "It should come as no surprise that there is no scriptural basis for the atrocities being committed in the name of Islam.

"Our task is to reclaim our faith, by articulating clearly the true nature of Islam: the religion of peace, of moderation, of tolerance. We should speak this message clearly, so that all may hear it; and stand firm against the minority who use Islam to further violent and unjust ends.

"We can reclaim our religion, choosing harmony and acceptance over division and conflict. And we can broadcast a vision of Islam as it is understood by Muslims around the world: as a religion of peace, tolerance, and moderation."

Recalling the last time he spoke at the UN, Najib said: "Three years ago, I stood before you and called for a Global Movement of Moderates. It was a call to reject extremism in all its forms, because the real divide is not between East and West or between the developed and developing worlds or between Muslims, Christians and Jews. It is between moderates and extremists of all religions."

He added that much has changed since then, with protests and reforms surging through the Middle East and North Africa.

"Out of the heat of the Arab Spring, new questions arose: about the pace of democratic change, about the role of Islam in politics, and about the need for more inclusive development. But the search for answers to those questions has been put on hold.

"As authoritarian regimes have fallen, and governments have been swept away by political change, extremists have tried to fill the space that remains. Motivated by ideology, politics and religion, they have sought refuge from the hard work of development in the unholy practice of violence."

He added that conflicts have spilled across borders, inflaming old tensions, and igniting new ones.

"Around the world, extremism is taking lives and crushing opportunity. This affects us all; but it is one people, of one faith, who suffer most. I believe the greatest threat to Muslims today comes not from the outside world, but from within," he said, adding that the conflict between Sunni and Shia threatens the lives and livelihoods of millions of Muslims.

The Quran not only condemns suicide, unjust war, and retribution by force; it also makes clear the Prophet's desire for Muslims to live in peace with one another and their neighbours, the prime minister said. - September 28, 2013.

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