

Be consistent on human rights, Suhakam tells Najib
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The government's human rights commission has called on Datuk Seri Najib Razak to be consistent with his stand on human rights, following contradicting statements by the prime minister last week.

Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) chairman Tan Sri Hasmy Agam said being consistent was important when addressing different segments of Malaysia's multiracial society.

"This will avoid any possible confusion and ensure Malaysia's credibility internationally," Hasmy said in a statement.

Last night, Najib in a Facebook posting said Putrajaya was committed to the principles and values of human rights, days after he made a veiled attack on rights groups by saying that "human rights-ism" was a threat to Muslims.

Najib, speaking at the opening of the National Quran Recital Competition in Kuantan, said "extreme human rights" was moderated by the law, the Federal Constitution and Malaysia's cultural values.

Yesterday, rights group Association for the Promotion of Human Rights, or Proham, asked Najib to clarify or withdraw his comments on "extreme human rights", saying the remark raised "greater concerns" about Putrajaya's commitment to fostering human rights.

Lawyers for Liberty (LFL) also hit out at Najib, saying he had reinforced his "false reformist" credential.

"Although outwardly and in the international arena he has advocated for human rights, moderation and rejection of extremism, but in the country, he seems to be singing a different tune," LFL executive director Eric Paulsen told The Malaysian Insider yesterday.

Najib today said "as Malaysians, we believe in human rights, and subscribe to the philosophy, concepts and norms of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights".

He added that despite Malaysia being a Muslim-majority nation, "our faith respects other faiths, and our commitment can be consistent with our constitution and our values".

In response, Proham said his confusing terms such as "extreme human rights" and "human rights-ism" had yet to be clarified. – May 17, 2014.

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