

**Najib will never support militants, says Putrajaya  
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After two days of intense backlash over his purported support for the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Isil), Putrajaya has clarified that Datuk Seri Najib Razak did not indicate any support for the militant group and would not endorse any forms of violence and extremism.

A statement from the Prime Minister's Office said Najib's comments, which were made during his speech at Cheras Umno branch anniversary dinner earlier this week, and as reported by some websites, had been "taken out of all context".

"Isil was mentioned briefly and in passing, but it is important to note that the prime minister in no way indicated any support for Isil," said a Putrajaya spokesperson today.

"Any allegation to the contrary is completely false," the statement said.

The spokesperson said Najib's strong stance against violence and extremism was on record and remained undiminished.

"The prime minister has called for a Global Movement of the Moderates, rejecting extremism in all its forms, and he will continue to advocate for moderation."

The spokesperson added that the government had classified Isil as a terror organisation and was doing its part in combating it, such as arresting suspected members of the Middle Eastern militant group in Malaysia.

At the dinner, Najib had allegedly outlined six virtues Umno needed to survive and flourish in the country among which bravery, as displayed by some Middle East militants, was a requisite trait.

The Umno president had purportedly said the party should emulate the exploits of a Middle Eastern militant group which defeated an Iraqi force outnumbering it.

"For example, when someone dares to fight to his death, he can even defeat a much bigger team," he had said in singling out Isil.

"Whether we agree or not is another matter, the group Isil with the strength of just 1,300 people, can defeat an Iraqi army of 30,000 soldiers, until four, five generals with three, four stars run for their lives, jump out the window at night," he was reported to have said.

Isil, a splinter group of al-Qaeda, wants to set up an Islamic caliphate encompassing both Iraq and Syria and has been classified as a terror organisation.

Malaysians are said to be linked to the group. One was believed to have been the suicide bomber who killed 25 Iraqi policemen last month while police here arrested three local men, believed to be members of the group, earlier this month.

Najib's comments had sparked condemnation from political observers and opposition politicians, saying that this was a form of rejection of democracy and he had destroyed diplomatic relations between Malaysia and other countries. – June 26, 2014.

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