

In Sarawak, Najib says secession is stupid talk

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KUCHING, Aug 10 — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak tonight described talk of Sarawak seceding from Malaysia as “just stupid talk by a small group” over claims that the state was marginalised by the federal government.

He said Sarawak had made a sacred choice by agreeing to form the Federation of Malaysia with Malaya, Sabah and Singapore in 1963. Singapore, however, was expelled from the federation in 1965.

“I agree with Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem, who spoke earlier, that secession (by Sarawak) from Malaysia is just stupid talk,” he said at the launch of the National Month celebration and the hoisting of the National Flag campaign at Padang Merdeka here tonight.

“Therefore, the question of secession from Malaysia does not arise at all for Sarawak,” he said.

Najib was referring to a “small group” in Sarawak which wanted the state to pull out of Malaysia due to what they claimed was marginalisation of Sarawak by the federal government.

Last Friday, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who is also the home minister, issued a stern warning to “disruptive elements” who wanted Sarawak to secede from Malaysia.

On July 22 this year, over 10,000 people turned up for the Sarawak For Sarawakian (S4S) Freedom and Independence Day Walk at the Song Kheng Hai Field here, demanding that the federal government give greater autonomy and more power for Sarawak.

Some bore placards with the word “Referendum” for Sarawak in Malaysia.

The walk also demanded that the state government declare July 22 as Sarawak’s Independence Day as it was the day Sarawak attained its self-determination from Britain in 1963.

Najib said there is no need to accede to the demand by a small group for Sarawak to pull out of Malaysia.

“I have referred the matter to Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Ali Hamsa to talk with the State Secretaries of two States.

“I will make the announcement with the chief ministers of Sarawak and Sabah on the forms of empowerment that the federal government will hand over to the two states,” he said.

Earlier in his speech, Chief Minister Tan Sri Adenan Satem said there is no need for Sarawak to pull out of Malaysia.

“Autonomy, yes, and more power to Sarawak, yes, but secession, no,” he said when responding to calls from certain groups to withdraw from Malaysia due what they claimed marginalisation of the state by the federal government.

He said the federation of Malaysia is umbrella that protects the state.

“We find safety and security by being in the federation,” he said.

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