

**Govt Committed To Maintaining Peace, Harmony - Najib
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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 21 (Bernama) - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak said tonight the government remained committed to maintaining peace and harmony in the country by ensuring that no serious racial disputes broke out.

Najib said in an interview on the 'Soal Jawab' programme over TV3 that he would do his best to protect the interests and well-being of all Malaysians.

"This is the commitment of the government, and I wish to emphasise that as the prime minister I am responsible to the people of Malaysia. My attention is always on that, not on any quarters outside the country.

"For the people of Malaysia, I will do my best to protect their interests and well-being," he said.

Touching on the concept of unrestricted and absolute freedom practised in Western countries, the prime minister said that was not suitable for implementation in Malaysia as it could trigger racial conflicts.

"If anything happens in our country, it will have serious consequences. In some countries, there are no racial differences. Anything that happens will not turn into a racial conflict; it will not be racial in nature. However, in Malaysia, anything that happens can quickly turn into something racial and trigger a racial conflict," he said.

He said the government had to look into the form of administration, laws and values most suitable for Malaysia to maintain national peace, harmony and stability.

As such, he said, the Sedition Act which the government decided to retain could protect not only the Malays and Islam but also the people of all races in the country.

The prime minister said Malaysians could still debate openly on various matters, including criticising the government.

"If we look at the social media, there is much negative comment about the government.

"Which goes to show that there is much freedom in Malaysia, and democracy is healthy. One can deliver a speech anywhere, so long as one gets the permission and so on. It is not a problem," he said.

Nevertheless, he said, the freedom accorded by way of democratic practice should not drive the people to do something that could lead to conflicts in the country, he said.

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