

Najib justifies green light for 'red shirt' rally
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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak today sought to justify the green light his government gave to the "red shirt" rally on Wednesday, after the international media highlighted it as an "anti-Chinese demonstration".

Najib said unlike the Bersih 4 rally, which he had earlier denounced as "shallow-minded" and "demo-crazy", the September 16 "Himpunan Rakyat Bersatu" had no intention of toppling the government.

He said despite being declared illegal, the authorities did not stop Bersih 4 from taking place on August 29 and 30.

"At the same time, there are those who question the authorities' decision for allowing the 'red shirt' group to rally," said Najib, in an audio clip uploaded on his blog.

"I was informed by the police that this was because, first, they did not intend to overthrow the government, second, there were no preparations to march to the place where they wished to demonstrate, and third, they received permission from DBKL."

However, in the run-up to the rally, the organisers had voiced their intention to march to Padang Merbok from various meeting points around Bukit Bintang.

The rally saw racially charged remarks and placards, with tense moments when participants were upset over questions posed by some journalists.

Riot police were also forced to use water cannon to stop rowdy protesters from entering Petaling Street.

Najib said today the government would not compromise on security and threats against other races.

"That is why when they breached the prohibited area, the authorities acted to disperse them even though they were forced to use water cannon," said Najib.

"Police are also investigating those involved in triggering racism and whoever is found guilty will be charged under the Sedition Act."

On Wednesday, Umno Supreme Council Tan Sri Annuar Musa had justified the rally's racial overtones by declaring that he was racist himself.

But he said his "racism was based on Islam" and it was allowed as long as it did not involve oppressing others. – September 18, 2015.

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