

**Malaysia's Multiracial, Multireligious Success Also Helped Secure UNSC Seat - Najib  
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SHAH ALAM, Oct 19 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak on Sunday attributed Malaysia's securing of a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council also to its success as a multiracial and multireligious nation.

"We can show the world in a humble way through our concept of moderation and politics of compromise," he said when opening the 43rd national delegates conference of Gerakan at the Setia City Convention Centre here.

Najib said the Barisan Nasional (BN) rejected any form of extremism in its efforts to build the nation in accordance with the foundation laid by past leaders.

Past leaders had drawn up the Federal Constitution based on the politics of compromise and they believed in national integration and not racial assimilation, he said.

"We have Bahasa Melayu as the national language but allow the use of other languages in the country; we also have Islam as the official religion but we allow the practice of other religions without any prohibition," he said.

Gerakan president Datuk Mah Siew Keong, MCA president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai, MIC president Datuk Seri G. Palanivel, PPP president Tan Sri M. Kayveas and former Gerakan president Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon were also present at the opening ceremony.

Najib, who is also BN chairman, said Gerakan's victory in the Teluk Intan parliamentary by-election in May reflected the resurgence of the party.

He praised Mah for his willingness and courage to take the risk of being the BN candidate in the by-election to fight the young Dyana Sofya Mohd Daud fielded by the DAP.

"When the Teluk Intan seat fell vacant, doomsayers felt that it would be difficult for the BN to reverse the 7,313-vote deficit. Many also thought that it will be difficult for the BN to win the seat and that Mah will be committing political suicide if he stood as a candidate.

"I am proud of him and admire him. He was prepared to risk his position as the president of Gerakan. If he were to lose, it will have been impossible for him to defend his position as the president in the moral sense. That was a risk that Mah was prepared to take and he made a political sacrifice," he said.

In the by-election, held on May 31, Mah, who is now a minister in the Prime Minister's Department, beat Dyana Sofya by 238 votes. He polled 20,157 votes to Dyana Sofya's 19,919.

Najib said he wished to see the Teluk Intan by-election victory as the beginning of Gerakan's political resurgence that would culminate in the recapture of Penang from the opposition.

The prime minister said Gerakan should have a comprehensive plan to win over the people of Penang and added that he was convinced the party had the capability to do that.

"We should ask the DAP how many affordable houses they have built (in Penang) and how much of investments they have brought to the state compared with the period when Penang was administered by Gerakan leaders, such as Koh (Tsu Koon).

"Don't keep quiet; attack them with facts, not with lies. They attack us with lies, and that is why we have to have a plan to show the way (to recapture Penang)," he said.

Najib called on all component parties of the BN to be more focused and to cooperate as a family to ensure the coalition's survival.

He also touched on the cooperation between Gerakan and MCA and said it had improved, particularly during the Teluk Intan by-election.

"Gerakan must work together with MCA; we need to be together as a family. We supported each other in Teluk Intan where the MCA and Gerakan worked very well and Umno, MIC and PPP also worked together very well.

"I am convinced that if we can practise such BN spirit, Gerakan will continue to be very relevant in the context of Malaysia," he said.

Najib reminded the leaders of all the BN component parties to practise policies of moderation and balance to ensure that the people continued to support the coalition in the next general election.

He said that under the democratic process practised in the country, the absolute power to elect leaders was in the hands of the people and they were exposed to a lot of inaccurate information on the Internet.

"The people today have a lot of information, sometimes too much of it. They are instigated over the Internet. Not all the information is accurate; there is much untruth.

"During the 13th general election last year, the Chinese votes for the BN dropped because the opposition claimed that the BN had brought in 40,000 voters from Bangladesh, and many believed this.

"This is the problem. As such, we must educate the people to think more rationally," he said.

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