

Najib Vows To Defeat Militant Groups And Their Ideology

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By Jamaluddin Muhammad

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 19 (Bernama) -- Against the backdrop of rising threats from global terrorism, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today voiced his determination to defeat militant groups and their extremist ideology emerging in this region.

The Prime Minister stressed that there was no place for extremism in society.

Many countries across the region have suffered at the hands of extremists and Malaysia is no exception, as was reflected by the barbaric murder of Bernard Then in the Philippines recently, he said.

"This has given me greater determination than ever to ensure that all possible measures are taken to defeat not only the militant groups that have arisen in the region but also the extremist ideology they use," Najib said in a written response to questions posed by Bernama.

Then, 39, an electrical engineer from Sarawak, was kidnapped from a restaurant in Sandakan, Sabah, on May 14 and was beheaded by the Abu Sayyaf militant group in the Philippines on Tuesday.

The Bernama questionnaire was forwarded in conjunction with the 27th ASEAN Summit and Related Summits here.

Najib said he had also called for ASEAN member states to speak up against and reject extremism, and support moderation.

ASEAN leaders need to counter radicalisation and violent extremism in all forms and manifestations that lead to terrorism, he said.

"This includes the prevention of radicalisation, financing, recruitment and mobilisation of individuals into terrorist groups," he added.

Najib said that in the war against terrorism, Malaysia would look at cooperation not only with other ASEAN member states but also countries beyond the region.

In further substantiating his point on the matter, Najib said Kuala Lumpur would be hosting an International Conference on Deradicalisation and Countering Violent Extremism on Jan 25 and 26 next year.

This conference, he said, would not only involve ASEAN member states but also other countries, namely Australia, China, France, Japan, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom and the United States.

"However, words by themselves are not enough, and I wish to assure our citizens that we will be looking at concrete measures that can be taken to counter the spread of radicalisation and extremism in a holistic manner," he said.

On the problem of irregular movement of migrants affecting ASEAN countries, the prime minister said a global effort by all countries was necessary to break the vicious cycle of exploitation.

This issue was of urgent concern not just to ASEAN, but also to the international community, he said.

Najib said it involved people smuggling and human trafficking syndicates preying on vulnerable people seeking better lives for themselves and their families.

"We believe that tackling the root causes is vital, and Malaysia will certainly do its part in addressing this complex and tragic crisis," he said.

In showing ASEAN's serious commitment towards this end, he said ASEAN leaders would be signing the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children at the current Kuala Lumpur meetings, signalling the grouping's determination to alleviate the terrible suffering people-trafficking causes.

On the annual occurrence of the haze blanketing this region, Najib said Kuala Lumpur would continue working towards ASEAN's vision of a haze-free region by 2020.

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