

**Resolve South China Sea Issue Through Peaceful Means – Najib
Bernama
Nov 21, 2015**

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 21 (Bernama) -- Disputes on territorial claims over the South China Sea should be resolved through peaceful means and in accordance with international laws, said Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Opening the 27th ASEAN Summit at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre here, the Malaysian Prime Minister called on all parties to the disputes to exercise restraint.

"We stress the importance of resolving disputes through peaceful means, in accordance with international laws including UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea). We call on all parties to exercise restraint and avoid actions that would complicate or escalate tension," he said.

Najib wanted countries in the region to act more as ASEAN internationally, explaining that by being together, they were far stronger than as individual nations and the world would recognise as well as respect the rise of ASEAN and its achievements thus far.

And that, he said, includes maintaining peace, security and stability in the South China Sea.

According to media reports, construction work was going on in areas of the South China Sea claimed by six countries, namely Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan and Vietnam.

The reports mentioned, among others, that according to new satellite images, China is making rapid progress in building an airstrip suitable for military use in the disputed territories.

Najib, in his speech, also called on Southeast Asian countries to act more as ASEAN within the region and cooperate to find solutions to various problems.

"We need to cooperate to find solutions to environmental problems such as the haze, natural disasters, including floods and earthquakes, and crises of migration," he said.

In recent months, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia have been engulfed with haze caused by forest fires in Sumatera and Kalimantan.

On the issue of migration in the region, Najib said he was delighted that countries in the region would ink the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

-- BERNAMA

Copyright © 2015 BERNAMA

<http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v8/newsindex.php?id=1192046>