

**JKMPKA, A Mechanism to Boost National Understanding and Harmony**  
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PUTRAJAYA, Feb 24 (Bernama) -- The Committee to Promote Inter Religious Understanding and Harmony (JKMPKA) was established to strengthen understanding and harmony between the various religions in the country, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said that as a country of various races, religions and cultures, Malaysia needed a mechanism to find a solution in case a problem or conflict cropped up concerning religion.

"We must find solutions that are fair and just. There will be problems and challenges because we are living in a complex society, but we must face with a positive attitude," he said at the ceremony to hand over instruments of appointment to members of JKMPKA 2016-2017, here today.

Thirty-two heads of religions, academicians, and religious and social non-governmental organisations (NGOs) as well as youth representatives received the instruments of appointment effective Jan 1 this year to Dec 31 2017.

Set up in 2010, efforts of the JKMPKA focused on boosting understanding on the various religions, discussing issues that could jeopardise religious harmony and public peace, recommending government policies based on religious values and implementing social activities with the government.

Najib said: "I am confident Malaysians will continue to live in peace and harmony. I count on you to play your part to achieve that cherished goals. We all want peace and harmony and we want Malaysia to achieve success."

He said Malaysia's success since achieving independence generally went through events in building a nation successfully without any conflict that could destroy the country.

"It will be a continuous journey to strengthen the pillars and fabric of a multi-faith and multi-racial society. These efforts must be carried out in a conscious manner as it cannot be allowed to happen by itself.

"It has to be formalised and institutionalised, well-planned, coordinated and (there must be) concerted efforts to strengthen national unity.

"We may have national harmony but we must aim for a more ideal situation, that is a true sense of national unity," he said.

Najib also emphasised on the importance of achieving a sense of belonging as one Malaysian community "that is bound together with the sense of respect, belonging, togetherness".

In order to achieve this objective, he outlined matters that must be looked into namely respecting Article 3 of the National Constitution, Islam is the federal religion but the other faiths could be

practiced in peace in any part of the federation.

"We have to always base our action on the Malaysian Constitution. That is the essence of our nation," he said.

Besides observing the country's law, Najib said the multi-racial society must also uphold the principles of Rukun Negara.

"Besides that, we have to look for our core values that can cut across all faiths and all communities in the country. Some of the core values we try to identify include that we should conduct ourselves as Malaysians in a moderate way.

"Moderation, mutual respect, working together, spirit of give and take, wanting to find solution and not create problems. These are some of the core values we should adhere to.

"Finally, we have to culturalise it and make it part and parcel of ourselves. How we do that is by engagement, being together, visiting one another, and talking to one another," he said.

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