

Najib's Absence from UNGA Nothing Unusual - Ahmad Zahid
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From Abdul Muin Majid

NEW YORK, Sept 19 (Bernama) -- There is nothing unusual about Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak not attending the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said delegating the task of leading the Malaysian delegation at the UN meeting to the deputy prime minister was nothing out of the ordinary, as was the case with many other countries which were sending a representative in place of their respective heads of state and government.

"It's nothing unusual whether the foreign minister or the deputy prime minister attends as the representative at the United Nations General Assembly," Ahmad Zahid told Malaysian media covering his attendance at UNGA here Sunday.

He noted that of the UN's 193 member states, so far 54, including Malaysia's neighbour Indonesia, had indicated that their heads of state and government would skip the annual UN gathering.

"And even during the era of the longest-serving prime minister, others had represented him," said Ahmad Zahid.

"I hope that people don't make a mountain out of a molehill with regard to this matter," Ahmad Zahid said, adding that he had full trust in the prime minister's decision.

Concurring with Ahmad Zahid's view on the subject, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman pointed to the fact that he was given the responsibility of leading the Malaysian delegation to UNGA in 2009.

"Based on the attendance lists from previous years, you can see that not all countries were represented by their heads of state and government," he said.

Ahmad Zahid flew into New York on Saturday to lead the Malaysian delegation at the 71st session of UNGA.

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