

**Malaysians Who Ask Outsiders to Overthrow People's Mandate Not Patriots - Najib  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 2 (Bernama) -- Citizens who call on foreign powers to intervene in the affairs of their countries are not patriots, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said they, in fact, were betraying the people.

"For, begging outsiders to overthrow the mandate of the people is not the action of a patriot," he said when opening the 9th General Assembly of the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP) here today.

Najib noted that mutual non-interference was a very important concept that underpinned many international bodies such as ICAPP.

"We remember our struggles to take control of our own destinies and we must always fight to protect the sovereignty of the people that we represent - as UMNO has done from the beginning, and will continue to do so," he said.

Najib said UMNO, which celebrated its 70th anniversary recently, was one of the world's most successful political parties and one which had consistently been given the mandate by the people.

He told the audience that UMNO, of which he is president, had had determined opponents who had sometimes captured state assemblies - reflective of the country's status as a true democracy.

But at the national level, he said, UMNO had always been returned to office and they were many reasons for this.

"We are a Malay party but we have always extended our hand in friendship to all Malaysians because our concern is for all in this country," Najib said.

The prime minister said Barisan Nasional, of which UMNO is the backbone, had always put the people's welfare and well-being first, listening to their concerns and understanding their developmental needs.

"Being such a diverse country, we are aware that harmony is precious, and so we have always practised moderation.

"And being a democracy, we treasure the results of the ballot box - not the views of individuals, however famous - as the only legitimate expression of the people's will," Najib said.

In the speech, the prime minister also spoke at length about issues and challenges confronting Asia, such as poverty, terrorism and security as well as environmental degradation.

"To remain relevant to the people, it's the duty of governments - and indeed all political parties - not just to preserve democratic principles but also to help maintain the stability of their economies and security of their people," he said.

Turning to the murderous Daesh militant group, Najib said everyone, especially political parties from Islamic countries, needed to send out the message across loudly and clearly that there was nothing Islamic about the terror and destruction they inflicted.

Malaysia, he said, had taken measures to enhance its ability to counter terrorism with new legislation, including the Prevention of Terrorism Act, Security Offences (Special Measures) Act and the National Security Council Act.

Najib stressed that none of these acts were passed to restrict civil liberties.

"But there are no civil liberties for those whose lives have been taken by bombs and guns. Therefore, my government makes no apology for placing the safety and security of Malaysians above all," he said.

Malaysia, he said, would be glad to share its expertise in preventing radicalisation and in helping to deradicalise men and women who had fallen for the lies of wicked and un-Islamic extremists.

Najib also said that close collaboration among neighbouring countries was needed to counter problems such as haze and the threat of communicable diseases like Zika.

"We're now being hit by Zika, and Singapore has been hit, and the first Malaysian infected with this virus has been detected," he said.

On poverty, he said it was crucial that economic growth was shared by all in order for a nation to remain united.

"It is incumbent upon governing parties to forge a future for every citizen. No man, woman or child should be left behind," he added.

Over 72 political parties from 36 Asian countries are taking part in the three-day conference which started yesterday, aimed at promoting exchanges and cooperation to address regional challenges and opportunities.

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