

Riyadh Summit: Muslim countries unite in eradicating terrorism
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Prime Minister Najib Razak cautions current instability in the region raises much concern.

RIYADH: Malaysia has joined more than 50 Muslim countries in the Riyadh Summit in sending a signal to the world that they are united in eradicating terrorism.

Prime Minister Najib Razak said the world needed to be reminded that the Muslim leaders attending the meeting yesterday had completely condemned terrorism and violent extremism.

“The world should have no doubt that we stand collectively with the international community in the fight to eradicate this menace,” he told the gathering which included United States President Donald Trump at the Arab-Islamic-US Summit at the King Abdulaziz International Centre here, named after Saudi Arabia’s first monarch.

In thanking Saudi Arabia’s King Salman Abdulaziz Al Saud for his initiative in hosting the summit, Najib said the gathering had sent signals to the world community on the united effort by Muslim countries in combating terrorism.

However, Najib cautioned the meeting held in the Middle East region that the current instability in the region had thus, raised much concern to them.

“Unstable regions are fertile grounds for terrorism to flourish,” the prime minister said.

Turning his sights on Iran, Najib said he was aware there was widespread belief in the region that Iran had contributed somewhat to the instability in the region.

As Malaysia enjoyed and valued good relations with countries in the region, he said, Malaysia felt that Iran should avoid any action that could be interpreted as interfering in the internal affairs of its neighbours.

“This is not only for the sake of regional stability but also for the unity of the ummah,” he added.

In drawing his attention on the issue of terrorism, he said the fight against terrorism was not just military but also about winning hearts and minds.

To do this, Najib said, a credible narrative needed to be told, in which Islam and modernity were compatible, material progress and religious devotion go hand-in-hand, and religious knowledge and scientific inquiry mutually reinforced one another.

“We must, however, emphasise and reinforce our stories so that true Islam is known the world over, while at the same time we coordinate to crush Daesh and their allies wherever their malign presence is felt,” he said.

Najib also shared with the gathering that Kuala Lumpur had not flagged in its effort to combat the spread of radicalisation through the promotion of “wasatiyyah” (moderation) and the establishment of the Global Movement of Moderates.

Further substantiating his point over the issue, he said the country’s deradicalisation programme had a remarkable 95% success rate in reintegrating former extremists.

He also said Malaysia and the United States had worked to establish the Digital Strategic Communications Division to counter the negative messaging of terrorism.

Citing other initiatives taken by Malaysia, Najib said the country also worked with Australia to stop the flow of funding for terrorist groups, and also with the United Kingdom and France in seven flagship areas, including cyber-terrorism.

He said the recent state visit by King Salman to Malaysia had resulted in the establishment of the King Salman Centre for International Peace in Kuala Lumpur, a landmark collaboration between the two countries in fighting against terrorism.

He said the centre was scheduled to be in operation next month, adding that Kuala Lumpur was willing to share its expertise addressing extremism and terrorism with others.

Najib also thanked US President Donald Trump for reaching out to the Muslim world in fighting global terrorism.

Trump, in addressing the gathering, among others called on the Muslim world to take the lead in fighting radicalisation.

“Drive them out of your communities. Drive them out of the Holy Land. Drive them out of this world,” he told the leaders of Muslim nations referring to terrorists.

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