

**ASEAN-AUSTRALIA COUNTER-TERRORISM CONFERENCE ENHANCING REGIONAL  
CONNECTIVITY AND COOPERATION ON COUNTER-TERRORISM**

By : YAB. DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB BIN TUN HAJI ABDUL RAZAK, PERDANA MENTERI  
MALAYSIA

Venue :

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A very good afternoon.

**The Honourable Malcolm Turnbull,**  
Prime Minister of Australia,

**Excellencies ASEAN Leaders**

**The Honourable Peter Dutton,**  
Australia's Minister of Home Affairs,

**The Honourable Tony Sheehan,**  
Australia's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator,

**His Excellency Dato' Lim Jock Hoi,**  
Secretary General of ASEAN

Honourable Ministers, Excellencies,

Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

1. First and foremost, on behalf of the Government of Malaysia and my ASEAN colleagues allow me to express our appreciation and gratitude to PM Turnbull and the Government of Australia for successfully hosting the ASEAN-Australia Counter-Terrorism Conference 2018 the first time Australia has hosted a special summit with ASEAN leaders in your country.
2. I would also like to thank all the senior representatives from ASEAN Member States and Australia for their participation, and for the useful discussions which will support our collective determination to defeat those who would disrupt peace, and inflict death and destruction on their fellow men and women.

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. It is appropriate that we have been meeting here, for we and particularly Malaysia and Australia have a close bilateral relationship, particularly with regard to security and countering terrorism. These close ties were reflected by both countries signing a memorandum of understanding in the field of transnational crime in 2014.
4. Under this MoU, there has been a strengthened focus on counter-terrorism, civil maritime security, border management, combatting human trafficking, and on information and intelligence exchanges.
5. At the regional level, Malaysia has been working tirelessly with other ASEAN Member States, as we will this May at the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Senior Official Meeting on Transnational Crime, along with ten Dialogue partners, including Australia.

Ladies and gentlemen,

6. Malaysia has a long and consistent record in combatting the challenges of terrorism and violent extremism. We have passed a number of laws, including the National Security Council Act, the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act - because we were determined not to wait until an atrocity was committed, and only act later.

If we want to be effective in saving lives, it is essential that we have legislations that prevent acts of terrorism, rather than just deal with the aftermaths.

7. These legislations have saved numerous lives, both Malaysian and non-Malaysian. For I am proud to say that not one single terrorist outrage leading to loss of life has been committed on Malaysian soil.
8. We are committed to upholding that record, and let me express my deep gratitude to all the Malaysian counter-terrorism forces for their commitment and devotion in keeping us safe, at considerable risk to themselves.

Ladies and gentlemen,

9. What is also very important is promoting a culture in which radical ideologies find it hard to take root.
10. This is why during my speech at the United Nations General Assembly in 2010, I proposed the creation of a Global Movement of Moderates.
11. We followed this up with the establishment of the 'Global Movement of Moderates Foundation', or GMMF, in Kuala Lumpur, as a centre for the consolidation and dissemination of information and materials to underpin this.
12. Their work thus far has contributed to Malaysia's global reputation for promoting moderation, deradicalisation, and countering violent extremism.
13. Speaking about international recognition, I am also proud to say that on 9 December 2017, Malaysia's resolution on moderation was adopted at the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly.

14. The resolution is not only about the proclamation of 2019 as the year of Moderation, but it is also a call for the promotion of dialogue, tolerance, understanding and most importantly, cooperation.
15. Another milestone I would like to mention is the setting up of the King Salman Centre for International Peace in Malaysia.
16. This centre aims to rectify international misperceptions about Islam, as well as to counter the all too seductive narratives that Daesh and other extremists put out online. Daesh online propaganda can reach out to more than 300 million Muslims in our region.
17. I believe that this is our new main battle ground – to win the hearts and minds of our youths, so that they are not easily succumbed to the warped, perverse and evil ideology of Daesh, which is the antithesis of true Islamic teachings that protect the sanctity of all human lives, regardless of religion.
18. The selection of Malaysia by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to host this centre reflects the confidence they have in Malaysia as a moderate, diverse and harmonious Muslim country.
19. We mean to keep it that way, and over the years, we have taken a number of steps to ensure the peace and stability not only of Malaysia, but also the region.
20. We have the South East Asia Regional Centre for Counter Terrorism in Kuala Lumpur, as well as more recently, the Regional Digital Counter-Messaging Communications Centre.

We have taken all these initiatives because we believe that we must galvanise all our resources to counter online radicalisation efforts by Daesh with our own narratives on authentic Islamic teachings, which must be persuasive to our people, especially our youths.

21. Last November, Malaysia hosted the third Regional Counter-Terrorism Financing Summit, and we are happy to share the expertise and experience we have gained through several highly regarded deradicalisation programmes that we have initiated. Related to this, I wish to congratulate the Australian government on its initiative that is the SEA Counter Terrorism Financing Working Group, which will link finance intelligence units across the region to disrupt the increasing flow of funds for militant groups in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen,

22. The more we work together on these issues, the more successful we will be. As examples, I would mention the annual Redback Operation between the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency and the Australian Border Force, and the Malacca Straits Patrol initiative, which brings together Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand.

23. Similar mechanisms have also been set up in other strategic waterways - such as in the Sulu Sea, where Malaysian, Indonesian, and Philippines authorities work closely to curb kidnapping and piracy in those vast territorial waters.

24. For not only are we at risk of cross-border crimes, but many other issues, including terrorism and irregular movement of people, are no respecters of borders.

25. On that note, because of the suffering of the Rohingya people and their displacement around the region, the situation in Rakhine State in Myanmar can no longer be considered to be a purely domestic matter. In addition, the problem should not be looked through the humanitarian prism alone, because it has the potential of developing into a serious security threat to the region. Rakhine, with thousands of despairing and dejected people who see no hope in their future, can be a fertile ground for radicalisation and recruitment by Daesh affiliated groups.

26. Malaysia therefore stands ready to assist in finding a just and durable solution, just as we are cooperating with our neighbours in the peace processes in the Southern Philippines and in Southern Thailand.

We must be vigilant and increase our collaboration, because the collapse of Daesh core territories in Iraq and Syria has forced it to go 'underground' and re-emerge elsewhere, especially in crisis zones where it could grow and operate. We must draw lessons in the seizure of Marawi and be extremely concerned that at least 10 militant groups in Mindanao have declared their affiliation to Daesh.

Ladies and gentlemen,

27. No one country can fight terrorism alone. So I call upon all countries present to step up and intensify cooperation in preventing the spread of terrorist ideologies and to hone even more effective approaches to counter the threats of radicalisation and violent extremism in the Asia-Pacific.

28. In showing our full commitment to this, today we will witness the signing of the ASEAN-Australia Memorandum of Understanding on Counter terrorism.

29. On that note, I would again like to thank Prime Minister Turnbull, the Government of Australia and the ASEAN member states for your participation and contributions in the ASEAN-Australia Counter Terrorism Conference 2018.

30. The more united we are, the more effective we will be in combatting this terrible and inhumane scourge. None of us are safe from it. But together, we will be safer.

**Thank you.**

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