



BERNAMAPIX

Najib and Rosmah being briefed by (from right) Md Raus, Yong Zaridah and Azalina during the launch of the special criminal court in Putrajaya yesterday.

SOP soon on child sex crimes

> PM orders formation of committee to create guidelines to streamline cases involving minors

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PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak has called for the formation of a working committee to prepare standard operating procedures (SOP) to streamline cases involving sexual crimes against children.

"In an effort to fulfil this, the working committee comprising the judiciary, Attorney-General's Chambers, Women, Family and Community Development Ministry, and children NGOs, including Unicef, needs to be formed to devise this SOP," he said in his

speech at the Palace of Justice yesterday at the launch of a special criminal court for cases involving sexual crimes against children.

Najib said the SOP has to be appropriate in dealing with child witnesses, in line with best practices implemented by other countries.

"This court is the first of its kind, not only in our country but also for the Southeast Asian region," he said.

The special court will focus on cases involving child pornography, grooming and child sexual assault, in accordance with the Sexual Offences Against Children Act

2017 that was passed in the Dewan Rakyat on April 4.

Among those present at the launch were Najib's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Chief Justice Tan Sri Md Raus Sharif, Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rohani Abdul Karim, Dewan Negara speaker Datuk Seri S.A. Vigneswaran and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said.

Najib also thanked Rosmah in her capacity as Permata patron for contributing facilities in a special waiting room for child witnesses at the court.

The waiting room, launched by Rosmah, also includes a smaller room for young witnesses to testify in camera.

The special court, which is

located at an annexe building, also features a court recording transcription system, live video link, child witness screens and disabled-friendly facilities.

Md Raus said the court will be hearing its first case on July 4, involving the rape of a minor.

"The special court will be hearing 56 cases transferred from Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Selangor, with a senior sessions court judge specifically appointed to oversee them.

"In due time, this special court will gradually be expanded to all 13 states in the country," Md Raus said.

He added that former Klang sessions court judge Yong Zarida Sazali will be presiding at the special court, given her seniority and experience in handling similar cases.