

Adopted ISA detainees must stay out

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. — Internal Security Act detainees who leave Malaysia upon "adoption" by foreign countries will not be allowed to return.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said today that the detainees could leave Malaysia and give up their citizenship if they did not like the system here.

He said the Government had recently decided to allow detainees to leave the country if there were people willing to accept them.

'We'd like people to be free'

He said the decision was made because a lot of people had charged that Malaysia, in detaining people under the ISA, lacked human feelings.

"We have no wish to imprison anyone without trial — or with trial — if

we can; we would like the people to be free," the Prime Minister said at a press conference.

He said the ISA detainees were detainees because they posed a threat to national security.

"They are detained without trial because we know they cannot be convicted in the ordinary concept of law," he said.

"Some of them were detained because they are a threat to society although they have not committed anything wrong yet."

He said he had received telegrams off and on from people all over the world expressing their concern over detention under the ISA.

He said the Government was now giving such people, "who are without sin and who have not done anything wrong in their life," a chance to do something helpful.

Malaysia was now giving such people a chance to accept these detainees — "outcasts" in their own society — into their midst.

"We are offering these people a chance to adopt the detainees as citizens of their countries and allow them all the rights of the citizens of their country," the Prime Minister said.

He said Malaysia was doing the detainees a favour by allowing them to leave the country since they did not like the system in Malaysia.

"The world is a very big place," he said. "Why bother about little Malaysia?"

He said the Government had released more detainees in the last six months than ever before, "but of course our critics don't see this."

He said some people were not really interested in the fate of the detainees but were more interested in "scoring" a political point.