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Gerak launches boycott of Malay daily

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The Malaysian People's Justice Movement (Gerak) tonight held a gathering to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Operasi Lalang and to launch a boycott against the Utusan group of newspapers.

Gerak - a coalition of Pas, DAP, Parti Rakyat Malaysia and several NGOs - was formed late last month to forge greater justice and seek the abolition of the Internal Security Act.

Present at the gathering tonight were DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang, Pas deputy president Hadi Awang, PRM president Dr Syed Husin Ali and International Movement for a Just World president Dr Chandra Muzaffar.

Gerak secretary Mahfuz Omar said the boycott of Utusan Malaysia would be from Nov 1 to 8 to show their displeasure at the newspaper for printing "false reports" especially about the movement and the illegal demonstrations held in the city for the last few weeks.

Chandra said the ISA was not the reason that the country had achieved prosperity, peace and harmony among the multi-racial people.

He said countries which had laws similar to the ISA, including South Africa and Israel, had not been peaceful and prosperous.

He cited Singapore as a good example of a country which had a law similar to the ISA but had remained stable and prosperous as justice and the rights of the people were upheld.

Malaysian Islamic Students Association president Amidi Datuk Abdul Manan said the media was being used to prop up an "unpopular" Government.

He said the demonstrations held in the city were peaceful protests against the Government.

Amidi was released from detention under the ISA on Oct 5.

Hadi said Gerak was not a political movement but a gathering of multi-racial parties and organisations which were seeking justice and the end of the Barisan Nasional rule.

He said the people should not be misled by the Government which said that Pas and DAP were working together for their own cause.

Syed Husin said the boycott of Utusan Malaysia was justified. He claimed it was being used to spread lies and injustice.

Lim said Dr Mahathir should call for a snap election or otherwise give the freedom to the people to voice their views.

He said the police should not resort to brutality by putting down demonstrations but instead protect the people.

He said the ISA was the reason the police had acted brutally and arbitrarily against those people who spoke against the Government.

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