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`ISA must be retained for security reasons'

GERAKAN is of the opinion that the Internal Security Act (ISA) should not be abolished, its president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said.

However, he said a review should be conducted on its suitability to the prevailing security situation in the country.

"Like other existing Acts including the Land Acquisition Act, the provisions of the ISA especially on detention of individuals and the circumstances which allow the Act to be enforced on individuals, should be reviewed," he told reporters at the party's Deepavali "open house" in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Lim said the ISA, however, needs to be retained in the interest of the nation's security and the people's well-being.

"I will indicate the Gerakan's stand to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad regarding the ISA and will urge him to never ever think of abolishing the ISA.

"Malaysians should realise the significance of the Act in ensuring peace and harmony in the country.

"It is through the ISA that Malaysia managed to curb the subversive activities of the Communist Party of Malaya and save the country from destruction following the racial riots in 1969," he said.

Last Wednesday, Dr Mahathir stated that he had at one time proposed that the ISA be abolished but the police felt that the law was still essential to maintain national security.

The younger generation, he said, had never experienced bloodshed and therefore did not realise the effectiveness of the ISA and had no qualms about taking part in large-scale street demonstrations and threatening peace and security.

On the campaign seeking to have the ISA abolished launched by Gerak, he said the political parties and non-governmental organisations in the movement were opportunists with their own agenda and were not doing it in the interest of the people.

Bername reports: Penang Umno members have no reason to use the dismissal of a party leader as a cause for the party "to go haywire", Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

Party unity should instead be their uppermost concern as Umno has a bigger agenda ahead to continue improving the lot of the Malays who form the minority in the state, he said.

"It's normal that we see leaders come and go. More importantly is for us preserve unity as Umno is a party based on political consensus," said Abdullah, who is also Foreign Minister.

He was speaking to reporters after closing an exhibition organised by Jelutong Umno division economic and finance bureau in Penang on Sunday night.

Abdullah acknowledged that when former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was Penang Umno liaison committee chairman, Anwar did much for the party which will be long appreciated.

"However, something has happened and he is no longer an Umno member. Therefore, Penang Umno has to accept this fact and should learn to continue with the struggle without him around," he said.

Abdullah said component parties in the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) ruling coalition would want to see Umno remain united.

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