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Committee expresses concern over political situation

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Socialist International Asia-Pacific Committee today expressed its concern about the political situation in Malaysia, saying that the implementation of the separation of legislative, executive and judiciary powers was "flawed."

In a four-page statement on the committee's priorities and perspectives for the region after a two-day meeting here that ended on Saturday, the committee also said that it:

- \* deplored the continued incarceration of Lim Guan Eng, and called on the King to pardon him;
- \* condemned draconian laws such as the Internal Security Act;
- \* believed the amendment of charges against ousted Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was inconsistent with the practice of justice;
- \* noted the groundswell of disaffection and discontent among the Malaysian youth; and,
- \* was alarmed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent warning that the coming general election would be the "dirtiest" in Malaysia's history.

Among the recommendations it made to the Government, the committee said international observers should be allowed to monitor the upcoming general election to ensure that they are conducted fairly.

On Indonesia, the committee welcomed the ongoing democratisation process but said more needed to be done to ensure that the East Timorese were allowed the right to self-determination.

It also noted that a number of people in Bhutan, particularly those of Nepalese origin, had been forced from their homes and said authorities should allow those affected to return.

On Burma, the committee called on the ruling military junta to hand over power to the democratically-elected National League for Democracy, led by Aung San Suu Kyi.

It also called on all Asean countries to pressure the junta to begin a dialogue with the NLD, and to cease its war against the non-Burmese ethnic peoples, especially in the Karen, Karenni, Shan and Chin states.

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