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Parliament-Rights

SOCIETY'S RIGHTS OVERRIDE THAT OF THE INDIVIDUAL- GOVERNMENT

KUALA LUMPUR, July 19 (Bernama) -- An individual's rights and freedom in Malaysia are within the context of his responsibilities to society and its rights in general, the Government said today.

Hence the implementation of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia Bill 1999 which took into account the multi-racial nature of Malaysian society, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said when winding up debate on the Bill in the Dewan Rakyat.

It was unfair of the Opposition to claim that the element of safeguards in the Bill were restrictions on the freedom of the individual and a violation of human rights, he said.

He said laws such as the Internal Security Act (ISA) and the Official Secrets Act did not form the basis of Government administration but were rather standby safeguards for the peace, security and good of the country.

"The May 13 Incident of 1969 should serve as a lesson that when an individual is given absolute freedom it will only bring bad to the country," he said.

The Opposition portrayal of Malaysia as a dark state with much violation of human rights since Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad became Prime Minister stood in marked contrast to the actual facts and state of development of this country, he said.

Syed Hamid said in fact the Government need not table this Bill in Parliament for the present as many other countries had yet to sign the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Still the Government tabled it out of a sense of responsibility to educate the people on their own rights, he said.

He will continue with his speech in the Dewan Rakyat tomorrow.

--BERNAMA

AKT AAM