

Zam sees red over calls for Chin Peng's return

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KUALA LUMPUR: Deputy Information Minister Datuk Zainudin Maidin said yesterday he was disappointed there are Malaysians campaigning for the return of former Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) secretary-general Chin Peng.

He said Chin Peng was no hero who struggled for the country's independence, but rather a communist terrorist who committed murders in cold blood during the Malayan Emergency from 1948 to 1960.

"We have to remember Chin Peng is a communist. Once a

communist, always a communist. He is a rebel and a traitor to this country," Zamudin said after launching the Information Ministry's Quality Day celebrations here.

He was commenting on DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang's appeal to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to allow Chin Peng, who is on exile in Thailand, to return to Malaysia before the prime minister retires on Oct 31.

Zainudin said people who were for Chin Peng's return to Malaysia should remember the feelings of the ex-servicemen and

the many Malaysians, including estate and tin mine workers, who struggled against his fellow terrorists and, in the process, were tortured, killed or maimed.

He said he was also amazed how a book portraying Chin Peng as a hero could be published in Singapore which was a staunchly non-communist country.

"I was wondering how the book can be printed in Singapore when former Singapore prime minister Lee Kuan Yew is a very strong non-communist," he said.

"Lim Kit Siang also appears determined that the book should

be read," he said.

The book, *Alias Chin Peng: My Side of The Story*, has been approved for sale in Malaysia and has registered strong sales.

Zainudin said he was not asking Malaysians to ignore the book but they should be able to evaluate it from the aspect of the country's history.

He also advised the press "not to promote" Chin Peng's return.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had said last week the government will not allow Chin Peng to return.