

**Anti-ISA groups seek Dr M's backing to drop the law**  
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Suara Rakyat Malaysia (Suaram) and Gerakan Mansuhkan ISA (GMI) today called on former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad to voluntarily join them in supporting the demands of the people that the Internal Security Act (ISA) be abolished.

"If Dr Mahathir sees ISA as actually allowing human rights violations and abuses of power by those in power, then he should immediately call for its abolishment," GMI secretary and Suaram coordinator E Nalini said.

gmi indonesian embassy memo isa detainees 180108 e naliniBoth Suaram and GMI, Nalini (right) said, were shocked by Mahathir's claim that he had once tried to abolish the ISA while he was in power, but that he was blocked by the police force. His expose, she said, raised many questions.

"If his claim is true (that Mahathir is for the repeal of the ISA, but was blocked by the police), why has he vehemently defended the law all this while?"

"Why the continuous and wide use of ISA throughout the years, during Operasi Lalang in 1987, against the Reformasi movement from 1999 to 2001 and in war against terror after 9-11?"

"What triggered Dr Mahathir to suggest the repeal of the ISA? Are the police so powerful as to block the ruling of the prime minister?" Nalini asked.

Both the Suaram and GMI believe the principles of justice, fair trial and of innocence until proven guilty must be upheld at all times, without fear or favour, she said. These principles should not be violated at the expense of national security or for political interests.

**Government must answer for police powers**

Nalini also said the ISA violated the basic principles of human rights and the right to a fair trial in a court of law.

"If these principles were held dearly by Dr Mahathir, the ISA would not exist anymore today," she said.

If Mahathir's claim about the police was true, then he and the government must answer for giving the police absolute power to detain people without trial, Nalini added.

tenang by election nomination day pas and bn supporters 220110 police barrierSuaram and GMI also called for the reformation of the Malaysian police force.

"The only reason the police abuse their powers is because the government failed to implement any check-and-balance monitoring of the force.

"Preventive laws such as the ISA will always 'allow' the Special Branch to carry out violations and they will not be questioned for their actions as they are protected by the government of Malaysia and a bad law," she added.

Mahathir claimed yesterday that he had once tried to abolish the ISA, while he was in power.

"I suggested scrapping the ISA, but I depended on national security advice from the police and they said 'cannot' (because) there still are threats," he said.

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