

Najib's move sparks Perkasa's racism warning
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As human rights bodies celebrated victory triggered by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's announcement that the draconian Internal Security Act will be abolished, Malay rights group Perkasa was less than enthusiastic about the move.

Perkasa chief Ibrahim Ali, in a statement yesterday, said his organisation will adopt a "wait and see" attitude on the type of laws that will replace the ISA.

"Is this decision to make the government more popular or is it for the security of the nation? Perkasa will adopt a wait-and-see attitude," he said.

Ibrahim, (right) a former ISA detainee himself, cautioned that the move may backfire on the country's security, pointing out that there were still many "racist groups" in the multi-racial country.

"Don't be like the Malay saying 'keris makan tuan' (a dagger stabbing its owner).

"There are a lot of things that have to be looked at in a plural Malaysia where there are still many groups that have racist attitudes and do not respect the fundamentals of the country's constitution with all kinds of demands that we have seen recently," he said.

Cheer leader for ISA

The right-wing organisation has on several occasions urged the government to use the ISA that provides for detention without trial, including against a MCA minister over Mara scholarships and more recently, against leaders of Bersih 2.0 in the run up to its July 9 rally.

Ibrahim, however, welcomed the decision to lift the country's three still standing laws imposed during the emergencies declared in 1966, 1969 and 1977.

"Perkasa welcomes the abolition of emergency acts that are no longer relevant. Perkasa congratulates the prime minister in conjunction with Malaysia Day and the country's 54th independence," he said.

The move will ultimately see several emergency related laws, including the Emergency Ordinance that also provides for detention without trial and recently used against the PSM6, lapse.

Yesterday, Najib, in a televised address to the nation, announced a slew of reforms on civil liberties, including the abolition of the ISA, the lifting of emergencies, amendments to the Printing Presses and Publications Act and several other preventive laws.