

'ISA not that cruel', but Dr M backs its abolition
Malaysiakini.com
September 19,2011

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed his support for the abolition of the Internal Security Act (ISA) as announced by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

He said the move would give greater freedom to Malaysians.

However, Dr Mahathir pointed out that the ISA, which was inherited from the British era, was actually not too cruel because Malaysians were still free to give their views and opinions.

"Not all of those who opened their mouth were immediately detained under the ISA... and the perception that there was no freedom in Malaysia was also not correct," he said at the Aidilfitri open house organised by the KelabChedet.com in Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Mahathir said the move to abolish the ISA placed Malaysia "on the moral high ground", in fact it could be considered as one level better than the developed nations such as the United States and Britain.

"After the abolition of the Act, we can start the campaign to seek the freedom of those detained without trial, for example, at the Guantanamo Bay detention centre.

"Previously, they criticised Malaysia purportedly for being cruel, detaining people without trial, but they are the ones doing it now.

"They have probably just realised that in certain situations, Malaysia had to detain people without trial.

"But what they are doing in Guantanamo Bay is even more cruel by passing laws allowing the torture of detainees," he said.

However, Dr Mahathir feared that extremists and racists in Malaysia would take the opportunity to issue statements to the detriment of the country when the ISA was abolished.

Meanwhile, the former prime minister said he was using the blog as a medium to communicate with the people.

"Through the blog, I'm able to make criticisms and convey my opinion to be shared together," he added.

- Bernama