

Heed Najib, drop illegal assembly charges, AG told
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The attorney-general's chambers should heed the spirit of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak recent reforms announcement and drop illegal assembly charges against 21 individuals who participated in a candlelight vigil almost three years ago, said Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua.

“In the light of the Malaysia Day pronouncement by the prime minister last week, we call upon the attorney-general to heed the spirit of the speech and drop all 'illegal assembly' charges against these individuals,” he said during a press conference in Petaling Jaya today.

Pua is among the 21 people charged with illegal assembly and failure to adhere to police orders to disperse during an anti-Internal Security Act-cum-first Bersih rally anniversary candlelight vigil on Nov 9, 2008.

They were charged on Jan 23, 2009 under Section 27 of the Police Act, but more than two years on, with their 27th appearance at the PJ session court today, the case remains at the prosecution stage.

“The case has taken exactly 33 months to date and is a drain in time and finances for not only the accused, but also for the prosecution and judiciary,” said Pua.

He added that the group's lawyers will be submitting a letter to the attorney-general's chamber's soon for this purpose.

Reiterating that the gathering held then was peaceful, Pua said that such gatherings should be allowed in the spirit of Article 10 of the federal constitution, just as the premier had promised to consider.

Puchong MP Gobind Deo Singh, who was also present, also called on all similar cases to be dropped as the prime minister has promised to review this particular law.

“We will go as far as saying that those who have been charged under Section 27 (of the Police Act) for illegal assembly should have the charges withdrawn... This is the first step the attorney-general's chambers can take to show that they are serious in achieving what the prime minister has said,” he said.