

Nazri: ISA repeal delay to avoid security 'gap'
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By Hazlan Zakaria

The tabling of the Bill to repeal the Internal Security Act is being delayed to ensure the government retains its legal authority to continue holding detained terrorists, de facto Law Minister Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz said.

"We don't want to have to release terrorist prisoners being held under the ISA," he told reporters in the Parliament lobby today.

He explained that both the repeal of the current law and introduction of the new laws should be done concurrently.

"There cannot be a gap between the repeal and the new laws," Nazri said.

At the most, he said, the repeal of the ISA and passing of the two new laws must happen within 24 hours of each other.

Such a gap will take away the any legitimacy in holding those detained under the Act, Nazri added.

He said that the latest the ISA could be repealed was when the two laws to replace it were ready for tabling in March next year, during the next sitting of Parliament

Attorney-general working on the new laws

Pressed for further details, Nazri said that it was not his place to answer as those questions could only be answered by the attorney-general, who was overseeing the drafting of the ISA repeal Bill, as well as the two new draft laws.

hishammuddin hussein pc 210509 02Approached by reporters earlier, Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein had a different explanation.

Hishammuddin explained that the delay was because both the Bill to repeal the ISA and the draft Bills for the two new laws to replace it were still in the process of being formulated.

The consultation process, he said, was still ongoing, hence the need for the extra time.

He also denied that Singapore's ISA would be used as a model for the two new public order and national security laws.

Later, Bernama quoted Hishammuddin as saying the ISA could only be tabled in March next year as the government wanted to "get it right" with the two new laws for national security

He said the government wanted to ensure that the new laws were balanced with the need to ensure safety and unity f the people, and that all Malaysians were protected under the new laws.

"It is a question of engagement and consultations. We want to get it right. We want to make sure whatever amendment we plan is not just rhetoric," he added.

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