

Rights group slams ex-top cop Rahim Noor
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The association of ex-human rights commissioners (Proham) has taken issue with the assertion by a former police chief that human rights is a threat to Malaysia.

"Advocates and promoters of human rights in Malaysia must be regarded as true defenders of the spirit of the federal constitution and not viewed as a threat as argued by (former inspector-general of police) Abdul Rahim Noor," said the group in statement yesterday.

Proham said that it considered Abdul Rahim's remarks, delivered during a speech at the second annual general assembly of Malay rights NGO Perkasa on Wednesday, "with great concern".

abdul rahim noor perkasa 2nd agmThe former top cop has described the new threat as a "human rights wave", akin a new religion and comparable to the previous "wave" of communism that swept through Malaysia.

Abdul Rahim also posited that the "human rights wave is threatening the principles upon which the nation was built".

While recognising Abdul Rahim's right to speak his mind, Proham however strongly refuted his stance.

"The founding fathers of Malaya in 1957 and Malaysia in 1963 made a clear commitment to human rights as contained in Articles 5 to 13 such as equality, freedom of speech, assembly and association, and also freedom of religion."

In addition, Proham said, Malaysia has adopted a form of government which is based on parliamentary democracy with separation of powers - a form of governance that puts human rights as its highest consideration.

Proham argued that even if Malaysia has not ratified the Civil and Political Rights convention, it has made a commitment to respect human rights. Malaysia is also a member of the UN Human Rights Council.

It also pointed out that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has made a fresh pledge to make Malaysia a global example of human rights practice by reviewing some of the legislation which curtail fundamental liberties.

Based upon these two bulwarks, Proham contended that "the human rights movement is not a new wave which is threatening the nation but has been the cornerstone of our nation".

Rights group 'appalled'

Meanwhile, human rights advocacy group Lawyers for Liberty (LFL) was "appalled" by the statements made by the former IGP and that of former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamed, who came out in support of his former underling.

perodua tea time with mahathir function 271011 05"Such remarks made by Rahim Noor, Mahathir and other anti-human rights figures is a major embarrassment to our nation," argued LFL.

However, the NGO said that it was not surprised that Abdul Rahim came up with the statement, as during his time in office the former IGP "was guilty of widespread human rights abuses carried out by his police force under his directions, particularly during the Reformasi period".

"Nobody in their right mind can fathom his poor analysis in trying to dismiss human rights as a communism-like wave," LFL stated.

The group also alleged that Mahathir himself was another blatant violator of human rights since during his tenure as PM, there were mass arrests such as the Ops Lalang in 1987 and rampant police brutality.

"The attitude of BN governments since independence is that human rights advocates and activists are mere pests who should be disregarded and persecuted. In taking this position, they are absolutely wrong and failing in their duty to the rakyat."

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