

'They're trying to send us back to iron fist rule'

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Human rights NGO Suaram slammed academician Ridhuan Tee today for saying that human rights will undermine Islam, accusing him of attempting to derail the growing support for human rights among Malaysians.

"The current positioning is an attempt to further launch the country into the dark ages of authoritarianism and iron fist rule, and to re-establish the culture of fear that have undermined our democratic practices and public participation in Malaysia," Suaram programme manager E Nalini (right) said.

She noted that Tee's comments were in support of recent statements by former inspector-general of police Abdul Rahim Mohd Noor and former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, both of whom "are known proponents against human rights".

Tee, who is a Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia (UPNM) lecturer, had in a Sinar Harian column yesterday said human rights was used as a platform by some to destroy and erode the sanctity of Islam.

Describing the comment as incorrect and misleading, Nalini said the fundamental principles of Islam in fact support human rights in the form of social justice and fundamental freedom.

"Ridhuan Tee is reminded that the key events in the history of Islam, as in the freedom of Bilal who was a slave and the Hijrah of the prophet from Mecca to Medina, shall, in today's context, be understood as freedom from slavery and rights to seek refuge."

Last week, Rahim had warned of a "human rights wave" akin to the rise of communism in the past that would threaten the country's social contract.

This was later backed by Mahathir, who said human rights had been exploited for political expediency.

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