

Pakatan wants Peaceful Assembly Bill withdrawn
Malaysiakini.com
November 23 ,2011
by Aidila Razak

Pakatan Rakyat today called for the Peaceful Assembly Bill, which has been tabled for its first hearing, to be withdrawn.

Announcing their intention to “strongly oppose” the bill in the upcoming debate session, Pakatan leaders said the provisions are more repressive than section 27 of the Police Act.

“It is a step backward. All are disappointed and (PM) Najib Abdul Razak has smashed to smithereens the mirage created just two months ago.

“The restraints are very onerous, bureaucratic, undemocratic and open to a lot of abuse,” said DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang (right in photo).

“Under the new law, for instance, a person can be fined up to RM20,000 as compared to RM10,000 under the Police Act,” he said.

Among the repressive clauses in the bill, PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim said is the 30-day notice that organisers must give the police before holding an assembly.

Anwar also raised concern over the “absolute power” the Bill gives the police force to disperse and arrest those involved in assemblies deemed illegal.

“Malaysia is the only country in the world to have tabled a more repressive law, in contradiction with global developments,” he said.

“Even (Burma) has promised free and fair elections, resulting in Aung San Suu Kyi announcing that she will contest.”

PAS vice-president Salahuddin Ayub said there is also concern that fewer political ceramah can be held outside an election campaign period should the Bill be passed.

“Now, we only have to give 10 days' notice,” he said.

‘Advance notice impractical’

Giving advance notice for assemblies will be impractical, Salahuddin said.

“What if Israel attacks Saudi Arabia tomorrow? Do we wait for 30 days (before protesting)?” he asked.

The long list of requirements, added party colleague Mahfuz Omar, is like “keluar mulut buaya, masuk mulut harimau” (moving from one dangerous situation into another).

However, speaking to Malaysiakini after the press conference, Mahfuz conceded that, with its majority in Parliament, the BN will be able to push the Bill through.

“This is why we will be taking the matter to the Human Rights Commission (Suhakam) tomorrow, to get it to call for the Bill's withdrawal,” he said.

Among those expected to be at Suhakam to submit the memorandum are Salahuddin, Bukit Bendera MP Liew Chin Tong (DAP), Kepong MP Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP) and Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar (PKR).

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/182182>