

UUCA lawyer regrets PM's decision to appeal
Malaysiakini.com
November 25 ,2011
by Hafiz Yatim

The government is not committed in its democratisation effort, said lawyer Malik Intiaz Sarwar, following its decision to appeal over the Universities and University Colleges Act verdict last month.

While recognising the government's right to appeal, Malik (left), who is the National Human Rights Society president, said he thought the government would be more responsive to sentiments expressed by various quarters and left things as they were.

"In as much as the government is free to seek leave to appeal to the Federal Court, coming as it does on the back of the Peaceful Assembly Bill, its decision to appeal strongly suggests that the government is not as committed to democratisation as it says it is," he said.

"Nonetheless, should the Federal Court decide to hear the matter, its decision will be welcome," he said.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, while announcing the lifting of the three Emergency proclamations, said it would amend Section 15 of the UUCA but had also decided to appeal the landmark Court of Appeal ruling.

On Oct 31, a three-member panel in a majority decision ruled section 15 (5) (a) of the UUCA barring university students involvement in politics as unconstitutional.

Justice Mohd Hishamudin Mohd Yunus and Justice Linton Albert allowed the four former Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia students' appeal and declared that section null and void.

Justice Low Hop Bing disagreed.

UKM and the government were named as respondents in the appeal.

The government has until Dec 1 to file its appeal.

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