

**Cabinet orders review of Assembly Bill**  
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The cabinet today ordered de facto Law Minister Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz to review and amend the Peaceful Assembly Bill 2011.

Late this evening, several Chinese dailies quoted sources stating that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak had a hand in calling for the review.

Najib was said to be overseas when the Bill was brought to the cabinet, but was unable to provide any input on the matter.

At today's cabinet meeting, the source said Najib had made some suggestions and ordered Nazri to act on them.

The source said that although the Bill is scheduled for debate in the Dewan Rakyat on Tuesday, amendments could still be made when the Bill reaches the committee stage.

Among others, the provision requiring assembly organisers to notify the police 30 days in advance of their assembly would be reviewed.

Advance notice slashed to 10 days

A source told Malaysiakini that it was suggested that the 30-day advance notice be reduced to 10 days.

However, the source stressed, the cabinet was still adamant about banning street protests.

The Bill has been heavily panned by the Bar Council, Human Rights Commission (Suhakam), civil society groups and opposition parties.

They claim that the proposed law would provide more powers to the authorities to curb freedom of assembly and stifle dissent.

The proposed heavy fines - between RM10,000 to RM20,000 - for those failing to heed dispersal orders was also aimed as a deterrent.

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak defended the Bill, claiming that it allows more freedom to assemble because no police permit will be required.

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