

It's still not too late for Najib, says Kit Siang
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by Koh Gah Chie

DAP supremo Lim Kit Siang today said that it was still "not too late" for Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to withdraw the Peaceful Assembly Bill as the world celebrates International Human Rights Day.

"It is not too late for Najib to heed the opposition of Malaysians and UN human rights experts to the Peaceful Assembly Bill, and withhold it from senate and set up instead a Parliamentary Select Committee to conduct full and nationwide consultation on the Bill," he said in a statement today.

This, Lim adds, would give meaning to the International Human Rights Day being celebrated today which, unfortunately, rings hollow in Malaysia.

"After the prime minister's boast and claim during Malaysia Day celebrations this year to make Malaysia 'the best democracy in the world', Malaysia should stand tall today to celebrate International Human Rights Day.

"But this is not the case. Just like yesterday's International Anti-Corruption Day, the Malaysian government is quite sheepish and quite guilty-conscious about the event."

Lim adds that there is nothing to crow about today because the "hoopla and euphoria" on Najib's announcement of promised reforms has been nullified by the haste in which the Peaceful Assembly Bill has been pushed through Parliament.

Honouring UNHRC status

"For the first time in the nation's history, a whole phalanx of United Nations human rights rapporteurs have ganged up to denounce the Peaceful Assembly Bill as a grave threat to human rights."

Among the UN special rapporteurs who have criticised the bill includes Maina Kiai, Margaret Sekagya, Frank La Rue and Francois Crepeau.

"The prime minister must be mindful that Malaysia is a member of the UN Human Rights Council until 2013 and we should be setting an international example of compliance, respect and promotion of the universally-recognised human rights in international covenants."

The Peaceful Assembly Bill that puts a blanket ban on street demonstrations was passed by the Dewan Rakyat last month after swift Parliamentary sessions and is awaiting approval at the Dewan Negara.

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