

Four years after ISA arrest, Uthaya says 'no regrets'
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The Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) co-founder P Uthayakumar said he has no regrets over actions taken, leading to his arrest under the Internal Security Act (ISA) on Dec 13, 2007.

"We have no regrets over Hindraf's 18-point-demands struggle focused on the Indian poor.

"We have no regrets fighting against the might and tyranny of the Umno state-sponsored racism that segregates and excludes the Indian poor from the national mainstream development of 1Malay-sia [sic].

NONE "And also against racism in the 60 percent towkay (Chinese capitalist)-controlled corporate, banking, industrial and private sectors," said Uthayakumar (left) in a statement today.

He singled out Umno as the main foe of Hindraf, for it had allegedly wanted to punish the movement and its leaders at "all and any costs" over the its rally on Nov 25, 2007.

"(The rally had succeeded) in 'naming and shaming' and exposing Malaysia's Umno-racism [sic] for the first time at international fora," he said.

Hindraf was founded by Uthayakumar and his brother Waytha Moorthy, who as lawyers, took up legal cases concerning religious conversions involving Hindus and cases involving demolition of Hindu temples.

Indian poor 'far more critical'

Waytha Moorthy went into exile before the rally as it was increasingly clear that Hindraf leaders would be nabbed, while Uthayakumar and four others were detained for more than a year under the ISA.

r kenghadharan reach home 050409 03The four are lawyers M Manoharan, R Kenghadharan (right), V Ganabathirau and businessman T Vasanthakumar.

Uthayakumar was detained the longest at 514 days.

He said Hindraf does not regret its mono-ethnic cause because the situation with the ethnic Indian poor is far more critical compared to other ethnic groups.

"Our critics tell us that there are also the Malay and Chinese poor. Our answer is we also have the poor Jews.

"But here we are talking about the magnitude of the critical Indian poor problems, to the point of being driven to contemplate or to commit suicide."

Uthayakumar argued that the unlike the bumiputera poor, some of who have traditional villages and ancestral land as their social safety net, Indian Malaysians do not.

He said there is an advantageous situation among Chinese Malaysians who have 617 'new villages' as a safety net.

Struggle for Indians to stay afloat

He argued that the bumiputera and Chinese poor with land could live off the land.

"But for the Indian poor the only way out of their daily misery arising from poverty and inequality is to contemplate if not to commit suicide.

"Note that the Indian poor suicide rate arising out of poverty has been recorded to be 600 percent above that in the Malay community."

Uthayakumar claimed that both BN and Pakatan Rakyat do not care about the Indian poor because it was not politically rewarding to do so, and thus Hindraf's struggle must continue.

azlan"Unlike the other communities, we in the Human Rights Party and Hindraf have never demanded any special privileges or supremacy. We are merely fighting to stay ... above the waters and fighting not to be pushed below the waters.

"In the interim we await the day biracial 1 Malay-sia [sic] would truly turn out to be 1Malaysia in the true sense of the word like in the Western civil societies.

"Where the poor Indians, Malays, Orang Asli, Kadazan, Iban, Bajau, Penan, Orang Ulu are all treated alike equally, granted equal opportunities, treated with respect, dignity and with humanity and all live in harmony like one big family."

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