

**Send new security law to PSC, says Pakatan
MalaysiaKini.com
April 16, 2012
By Hazlan Zakaria**

The Opposition wants the nascent Security Offences (Special Measures) Bill 2012 to be sent to a parliamentary select committee to deliberate on its details and amend the Bill for re-tabling in the Dewan Rakyat.

The PSC, it proposed, should deliberate the matter for six months and rehash the contents before sending the Bill back to the House because in its existing form, it holds many opportunities for abuse and hides many more restrictive features than the Internal Security Act it is meant to replace.

NONETHis was made known by R Sivarasa (PKR-Subang) who held up the tabling of the second reading of the Bill by Prime Minister Najib Razak this morning by invoking Standing Order 55, which allows an MP to move a motion to send a Bill to a parliamentary committee.

Sivarasa said that he wanted to table a motion under Standing Order 55(1), under which a committee has to discuss the substance of a proposed new law before the it goes through the second reading.

However, Speaker Pandikar Amin Mulia said that while he understood what Sivarasa wanted to do, he differed on what "read the second time" meant.

While Sivarasa took it to mean that it must be before the second reading or the policy stage debate, Pandikar said that he understood it to mean the second time the Bill is debated in the House, hence the third reading at the committee stage debate.

Speaker: Table your motion before committee stage

As such Pandikar asked the Subang MP to withhold his request until before the third reading.

"Before the committee stage, I will ask you to stand up and table your motion," assured the speaker.

Sivarasa agreed and Najib continued to table the second reading of the Security Measures Bill, setting the stage for the policy stage debate that followed.

In their debate, the Pakatan MPs continued their opposition to the new security law the government intended to enact.

NONESaifuddin Nasution (PKR-Machang) made the comparison with similar legislation in Israel, and he pointed out that even in that country, the law only allowed detention of up to eight days,

Mahfuz Omar (PAS-Pokok Sena) recounted how he himself was a victim of the abuse of the ISA, something that he believed would still take place under the new Bill.

"I had nothing to with inciting racial tension. But I was arrested, but not former MCA deputy chief Lee Kim Sai and then Umno Youth chief Najib Razak, who is now prime minister, who were the ones inciting racial tensions," lamented the PAS elected representative.

However, the BN backbenchers defended the Bill, hailing it as a good move for democracy and a major win for the ruling coalition.

Abdul Rahman Dahlan (BN-Kota Belud) said the government did not bow to pressure from the other side of the aisle to propose the repeal of the ISA.

'Much ado for political mileage'

"We did not repeal the ISA because we listened to the opposition, we listened to the voice of the rakyat," Rahman said.

P Kamalanathan (BN-Hulu Selangor) called the opposition's attempt to refer the Bill to a parliamentary committee an attempt to make much ado for political mileage.

NONEHowever some BN parliamentarians and independents seen to be BN-friendly called for certain clarifications and additions to the Bill.

Ibrahim Ali (Independent-Pasir Mas) called for a special tribunal to hear and try cases under the proposed Bill, so as not to burden the courts with extra cases.

"If we must bring a person to trial after 28 days, then why not set up a tribunal to hear the cases, to be headed by a sitting Federal Court judge on a rotation basis," Ibrahim said.

Mohd Said Yusoff (BN-Jasin) asked what mechanisms would be in place to ensure that the police would not abuse their powers of arrest under the new Bill, as this could be done on mere suspicion.

The policy stage debate of the Bill is continuing in the House, with the sitting expected to end at 9.30pm today.

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