

Gov't says no to ISA truth commission call
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By Aidila Razak

The government has turned down calls for a truth commission to investigate claims that the soon-to-be-repealed Internal Security Act 1960 has been abused.

Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein said today such calls were merely to distract from the "progressive" Security Offences (Security Measures) Bill 2012, which is to replace the ISA.

"There is no need. (The critics) have just found areas to distract the public from the positive changes we have brought, in order to instil anger and hatred," Hishammuddin said.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Nazri Aziz had earlier told Parliament that there have been instances where the ISA, which allows detention without trial, had been used for political reasons.

NONEMeanwhile Hishammuddin (right) said he is still deciding on what to do with the current batch of detainees held under ISA at the Kamunting detention camp.

"All of them have been detained because of terrorist activities. It's not something easy, I have to look at every case," he said.

He added that the public would not accept any explanation if a released detainee ends up jeopardising national security.

"In the realm of security it is a zero sum game. We make a mistake and people die. We are dealing with terrorists," he said, of the detainees charges against whom have yet to be proven in court.

While he needs more time to mull the fate of the detainees, Hishammuddin said the new Bill is "so tight" because it was three years in the making.

"We have found the right balance of human rights and national security in the new Bill and this is just a beginning. We are looking forward to operation and capacity building of those involved," he said.

He said a special allocation has also been requested to train and equip police with the electronic monitoring devices as allowed in the Bill, for released detainees.

"There is nothing new (about the devices), they are used by some police forces overseas...That's the way forward," he said of the much criticised provision of the Bill.

Opposition just finding fault

NONEHe also expressed disappointment with the opposition which, he said, had "no constructive criticism for the new Bill", only finding fault with the government's reform efforts.

"I can't imagine it. The Bill that has taken three years to come to Parliament, and the opposition has nothing positive to say about it. Not a very responsible opposition at that," he said.

Sungai Siput MP Dr D Jeyakumar had proposed a long list of amendments, while PKR lawmaker R Sivarasa proposed that the Bill be discussed at a parliamentary select committee.

Both proposals were rejected and the Bill was passed by the Dewan Rakyat after about 10 hours of debate last Tuesday.

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