

BN uses Sedition Act 'selectively' to silence critics

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By Leven Woon

Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng has taken the government to task for investigating NGO Tenaganita executive director Irene Fernandez under the Sedition Act following her persistent questioning of the country's policies on migrant workers.

lim guan eng at asli debate 200212 01"(It) exposes the government's Political Transformation Programme as a cruel trick to deceive the people of the false dawn of greater freedom in the coming general elections," he lamented.

Lim, who is also DAP secretary-general, called for a repeal of the Sedition Act and an end to the harassment of Irene.

"Why should there be a Sedition Act in the first place to prohibit voices of dissent and opposition to BN?"

"Are there not more inflammatory speeches made by Umno leaders that threaten Malaysians with violence and even stripping of their citizenship that go unpunished?" he said.

Yesterday, Kuala Lumpur CID chief Ku Chin Wah said that Fernandez may be probed under the Sedition Act over her statements on migrant workers in the international media.

Citizen journalists 'giving voice'

On another note, Lim commended the CJMY (Citizen Journalists Malaysia) movement which has given birth to 400 citizen journalists, who have produced 1,900 videos and 2,000 articles on wide-ranging concerns involving the grassroots.

"While Malaysia is at a crossroads, we now recognise an increasing need and desire for alternative viewpoints to be presented, and for the voices of the grassroots, the voices of the voiceless and voices of dissent to be heard," he said.

The CJMY, which is holding its third annual conference this weekend in Georgetown, was opened by Lim today.

In a related development, PKR Youth information chief Lee Khai Loon in a statement today concurred that the Sedition Act was "irrelevant" and a "tool" for suppression of dissent. He said the police using the Sedition Act against Fernandez would "not only make the force look unprofessional but it would seem as if they are trying to protect law enforcement officers who are involved in corruption and harassment".

Lee said Umno/BN always justifies the use of the Act in the name of national security and

maintaining peace, “however, the Act is actually no longer relevant and has become a tool for the government to suppress alternative views and the opposition”.

“Many brave whistleblowers who have exposed wrongdoing and abuse of power by the authorities have been punished or intimidated using this draconian Act,” he said.

“That is why PKR Youth fully supports Fernandez’ acts of courage.

“We call on the government and police to stop all acts of slander that is dishonest to the nation, against Fernandez,” he said, maintaining that her allegations on the migrant issue were “true” and warranted the government’s “serious attention”.

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