

End the ISA as promised
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The Islamic Renaissance Front finds it utterly deplorable that the home minister said he would only offer an explanation for withholding the release of the remaining ISA detainees next week.

He said this on the 10th day of the hunger strike. Perhaps our minister is hoping that they would die by then?

If not, then his delay in explaining all too strongly suggests that there really is no reason why the detainees should be withheld, that this is all a stubborn show of force by an institution that is not willing to come to terms with its obligations to serve the people in the name of justice.

It is as if the reasons for their arrest were not known in the first place. As if imprisonment was not enough, the detainees were also denied any rights to legal counsel.

That nine detainees have resorted to a hunger strike is further confirmation of the draconian and colonial nature of the Internal Security Act (ISA).

The drastic measures that the detainees have undertaken to prove this point is understandable.

After all, it was our prime minister himself who ostentatiously declared that the ISA was to be abolished for not meeting contemporary standards of judiciary conduct.

Now, almost a year later, the Malaysian people are still waiting and wondering if that day will ever come.

The fact that Malaysia holds a seat at the United Nations Human Rights Council makes this all the more repulsive.

In the meantime, we can continue to observe the tragic irony unfold: while there is so much uproar from our government over the violation of human rights abroad, namely in Palestine and recently concerning the Rohingya refugees, there remains utter indifference and silence when it comes to detainees under the Internal Security Act, who for all we know are innocent, since they were never given a fair trial.

All this confirms the age old truism that it's often much easier to moralise about other people's problems than to clean up one's own house.

That this administration is clearly violating every aspect of its commitment to a Wasatiyah or moderate approach to government is no longer surprising by now.

Indeed Malaysians have been left in the dark on their government's moral atrocities, in no small part, thanks to the indifference of a complicit clerical class whose silence on this matter only further legitimises the Malaysian government's inhumane treatment of the ISA detainees.

Where is the so called young ex-mufti reformer who rejoiced with optimism and heaped

praises after Najib's announcement that the ISA would be abolished? Does he think that his task of reform is now over?

Where are the enlightened youths of Hakim and their endless joy in nagging everyone about the importance of Islamic Adab and civilisation?

Is the ISA's complete negligence of the principle of evidence and fairness, so crucial to Islamic law, somehow exempt from intellectual and moral scrutiny, since it is practiced by Malay fascists?

Where is Ideas and their endless preaching about liberalism and freedom? Are we expecting the security at Kamunting to be run by private security contractors before we can expect Ideas to take an interest on this issue?

The Islamic Renaissance Front calls for the release of all detainees currently withheld under the Internal Security Act.

Should there be any probable cause of criminal offence, they should be given an absolutely free and transparent trial based on the highest standards of human rights and international justice.

In the meantime, we express our unconditional support to all our comrades who continue to fight any tyrannical Acts for a better and more just Malaysia.

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