

Return Waytha's passport, Malaysian gov't told
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By Susan Loone

Hindu rights pressure group Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) has called on the Malaysian government to return its chairperson P Waythamoorthy's passport to facilitate his return from exile in the United Kingdom.

Hindraf's national advisor, N Ganesan, said Waythamoorthy plans to be on Malaysian soil on Aug 1, "with or without" his passport.

"He would like to return home with dignity and full rights as a citizen of this country and as the chairperson of Hindraf," Ganesan told Malaysiakini.

"Therefore we demand that the Malaysian High Commission in London immediately issue him a passport," added Ganesan, who is based in Penang.

Ganesan said it was the previous prime minister and then-home minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi who made the decision to withhold his colleague's travel document.

He then called on current Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein to rescind the decision and instruct the competent and relevant Foreign Ministry officials to immediately issue him a new passport.

He added that Waythamoorthy has announced his intention of returning to Malaysia after more than four and a half years in exile in the UK.

This exile was imposed on Waythamoorthy by the Malaysian authorities, he stressed.

'It will save all the embarrassment'

Ganesan was referring to Waythamoorthy's passport being withdrawn by the UK Border Agency on April 28, 2008, at Gatwick Airport, UK.

It was withdrawn on instruction from the Malaysian authorities via a letter dated March 17 the same year.

Ganesan reiterated that Waythamoorthy plans to be on Malaysian soil on Aug 1 although he may not be issued his travel documents by then.

"It will save all the embarrassment and problems associated with this to all concerned, if the Malaysian government will issue him a passport in the amicable manner that we request," said Ganesan.

"He has since utilised the time in exile to make the necessary preparations for the historic suit against the British government on behalf of all the marginalised and poor Indians in Malaysia," he added.

"This is for the role the British government played in their current depressed and marginalised state in Malaysia," he stressed.

Ganesan said that since the case has been registered on July 2, Waythamoorthy is ready to return to Malaysia to continue his human rights work from within the country.

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