

'PM's statement admission of abuses under ISA'
MalaysiaKini.com
July 10, 2012

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's statement that the Internal Security Act was abolished because it was of no use politically is an admission that the Act was abused for political purposes, the Anti-ISA Movement (GMI) says.

According to GMI chairperson Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh and Suaram coordinator Syukri Razab, the PM's statement confirms that the government had all this while "lied to the people by saying that the ISA was never abused and used for national security".

"The PM confirms that the ISA was used to clamp down on political foes, only to have the opposite happen," Syed Ibrahim and Syukri said in a statement.

"It is as if Najib is saying that detention without trial, torture and years behind bars are something that was endorsed by the government to stop political dissent.

"He had acknowledged the dirty things that happened, without any sign of remorse or admission that wrongs were committed."

They added that such a statement also gave rise to doubts about the new Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012, which was on June 22 gazetted to replace the ISA, but is yet to come to force.

"If the ISA failed to stop political foes, will the new Act take over this role more efficiently?" they asked.

Syed Ibrahim and Syukri added that the clause in the new Act prohibiting politically-motivated detention offered little safeguard as it was "too general" and that official records would show that no one was held under the ISA for political reasons.

"For example, when the ISA was used to stop political foes, the detainees were held using trumped up charges like trying to orchestrate a riot to topple the government," they said.

They added that the PM's statement also explained why 45 people were still being held at the Kamunting detention camp under the repealed Act.

"Their release is not considered a critical matter because they do not pose any political risk to the BN," they said of the individuals being held for alleged human trafficking, falsifying documents and involvement in terrorism.

'Cops have to find evidence now'

Yesterday, Malaysiakini reported Najib telling civil servants that the government had "abolished the ISA because it doesn't help us (the government) politically".

"You don't kill someone politically by putting him under ISA, in fact you enhance the person. All the ex-ISA detainees did not lose their political standing," he said at the dialogue session with civil servants.

Najib also said that the Emergency Ordinance was done away with because technology like

the mobile telephone mean that such laws no longer "make any sense".

"Before, if we thought someone was a bad person, it was easy. We nab him under EO, send him far away, to Pasir Puteh, or to places like Jerantut. But today he will have a cellphone wherever he is so he can operate. It doesn't make any sense," he said.

These revisions of the law, he said, were part of the government's "all-embracing reform", which would also require civil servants to work harder.

"If people do wrong we have to look for evidence and charge them in court. Our police have to retrain themselves to look for evidence. The challenges are different. Before, just nab," he said.

Najib was using these examples to illustrate how the government was responding to a society in transition that is seeking more freedom.

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