

Najib resorting to Mahathirism as GE looms, say NGOs
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NGOs have slammed Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak for returning to 'Mahathirism' with the sedition charge against PKR vice president Tian Chua in the run up to the 13th general election.

The group of 47 NGOs were referring to Former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad use of draconian laws such as the Sedition Act and Internal Security Act to silence the opposition. "The sedition charge against Tian Chua could mean a breakaway from Najib Razak's vow to transform the conservative BN rule.

"It can be seen as a sign the prime minister is re-embracing Mahathirism with the general election looming.

"Former Prime Minister Mahathir is notorious for his cruel and undemocratic means to suppress his opponents," said the group in a statement today.

Its endorsees run the gamut of civil society, from Suaram to gender rights groups to the Malaysians For Beng Hock movement.

The group said charging Chua was a sign that Najib was backtracking on his promise on July 11, 2012 that the government would repeal the Sedition Act 1948.

"We demand an answer from the PM whether or not he has, by charging Tian Chua under the draconian act, broken his promise and failed to deliver his legislative reforms."
'Right to question'

The NGOs also blasted the charge as unreasonable, as the Sulu intrusion in Sabah was a matter of public interest and "the people have the right to information that must not be curtailed on any grounds by the authorities".
As the government had initially kept the public in the dark over the intrusion, they said, "leaders or the public should not be blamed for questioning the truth of the incident".

"We have seen BN and Pakatan politicians cross swords by accusing each other of having a hand in the armed intrusion, and we see no reason why such remarks should be categorised as 'seditious'," they said.

Chua was charged with sedition last week for allegedly claiming the intrusion in Lahad Datu on a Umno conspiracy.

However, Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia had also similarly blamed PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim of having a hand in the armed intrusion that has to date claimed the lives of 10 Malaysian security forces personnel and 62 intruders.

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