

## **Independent radio stations hit on all fronts ahead of GE13**

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**By Nigel Aw**

London-based Radio Free Sarawak and Radio Free Malaysia have been jammed and their online portals inaccessible after being heavily hit by distributed denial of service (DDOS) attacks.

"There have also been attempts at broadcast interference on both radio stations by jamming from different parts of the world over the past few days.

"These have had limited success so far and we have been working on tracing the perpetrators," the founder of the stations, Clare Rewcastle-Brown (right), said when contacted.

This, she said, was on top of coordinated DDOS attacks on their respective online portals the whole of yesterday.

"We got them up, but they kept up the attacks, which came from all over, it appears, but mainly from the US and Malaysia, and our servers had to close down," she said.

Furthermore, the stations' affiliated whistleblower portal, Sarawak Report, has similarly come under attack but it is still holding for now, Rewcastle-Brown said.

The assault against the London-based radio stations and portals on all fronts comes just days after Parliament was dissolved on April 3.

The Election Commission is due to meet on Wednesday, after which it is expected to announce the nomination and polling dates for the 13th general election.

'Underhanded tactics'

"I think that all such attacks only show the weaknesses of the people behind them, who are evidently so dishonest and fearful that they resort to these underhand tactics against even the slightest attempt at a free broadcast media.

"The BN is throwing in very large sums of money to suppress our voice, but all the BN is doing is demonstrating to the world that its pretence of holding a democratic, free and fair election is a sham," Rewcastle-Brown said.

The attacks, she said, showed the ruling coalition's insecurity about the coming general election, even though the advantages was stacked in the BN's favour, with the vast resources to dish out election bribes and gerrymandering in all the seats.

"Every time they try to shut us up by such methods, they are proving they have no confidence of ever winning on the basis of a fair playing field and open argument.

"If these two radio stations are doing nothing else, they are showing Malaysia's BN coalition for what it really is to the rest of the world," Rewcastle-Brown added.

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