

M'sians abroad 'tarnishing country's image' blacklisted

MalaysiaKini.com

May 30, 2013

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6,564 Malaysians will have their passports cancelled to prevent them from leaving the country, among others, because they had "tarnished the nation's image abroad".

According to Immigration Department director general Alias Ahmad, those involved will be barred from leaving the country for three to five years in accordance with the Passports Act 1966.

He told the Malay daily Berita Harian that those affected also include those who contravened a foreign country's immigration laws or had committed other crimes while abroad.

NONE" They have been identified and when they return, we will cancel their passports to ensure they cannot leave Malaysia," Alias (left) said.

Though there are no provisions in the law to stop Malaysians from returning to the country, but the government can stop them from leaving once they have committed an offence abroad, he added.

The daily had previously reported that among those who may be facing action are Malaysian students abroad photographed apparently holding a Malaysian flag upside down and making allegedly seditious online statements.

One such statement was allegedly made by a Malaysian living in Sydney, calling for the murder of some of Malaysia's political figures.

Signs of tyranny

Other dissidents had previously had their passport cancelled, such as in the case of Hindraf leader and now deputy minister P Waythamoorthy.

However, Alias was not reported to have mentioned a specific section of the Act which will be enforce to stop the 6,654 from leaving the country.

He had also been reportedly have contradictorily said, in the earlier Berita Harian article, that the government can use Section 8 of the Immigrant Act 1959/63 to stop the Malaysians from returning home.

Meanwhile, Global Bersih, the international chapter of electoral reform group Bersih, has called on police and Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to take action against Alias for allegedly threatening national unity.

"Global Bersih demands that the DG immediately withdraw his recent statement that Immigration will revoke the passports of Malaysians abroad who undertake anti-government activities," it said in a statement.

It also urged Malaysians overseas to "ignore such threats" as it is their constitutional right, via Article 9 of the Federal Constitution to express their opinions.

It also rubbished Alias' earlier claims that Section 8 can be used to stop Malaysians from entering the country, as that provision only applies to non-citizens.

"To equate loyalty to government with loyalty to nation and patriotism is the sign of a dictatorial regime with designs on extending its rule into the realms of tyranny," it said.

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