

Bersih wants to meet DG over passport issue

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By Aidila Razak

Electoral reform pressure group Bersih will request in writing a meeting with the Immigration Department director general Alias Ahmad over his statement that 6564 Malaysians will have their passports cancelled, among others for tarnishing the nation's image abroad.

According to its chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan (below), they hope to meet Alias next Tuesday (June 4) to "ascertain the legal basis under which he is acting and to get a copy of the list (of those whose passports will be cancelled)".

NONE"As far as I can see from the Immigration Act and the Passports Act cited by the DG, (the department) have no power to cancel passports for the reasons given...

"Is the DG honestly saying that Malaysia, that purports to be a democracy and which is a member of the (United Nations) Human Rights Council is actually threatening Malaysians abroad for exercising their fundamental rights to free speech and assembly?" she asked.

In a text message to Malaysiakini, the former Bar Council president said that the Home Ministry, under which the Immigration Department falls, should better concentrate its efforts on more pressing issues, like crime and deaths in custody.

Instead, she said, the ministry is abusing its powers by intimidating Malaysians overseas who are merely expressing their views.

'No moral right'

"In a matter of weeks, the administration has shown its hand in clamping down of dissenting views.

NONE"They (the ministry) have no moral right to assert they are upholding the law. Instead, they are upholding the rule of tyranny," she said.

On Thursday, Alias said the department has a list of 6,564 Malaysians abroad blacklisted and will have their passports cancelled, among others, for tarnishing the nation's image overseas.

According to the Berita Harian article, this included participating in demonstrations against the Malaysian government.

The demonstrations have largely been organised by Global Bersih, the international chapter of the electoral reform group, in major cities worldwide, protesting alleged electoral fraud in the 13th general election.

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