

DAP to offer legal aid for overseas Malaysians

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DAP will fight in court for Malaysians overseas whose passports had been revoked for opposing alleged BN corruption and abuse of power, said its secretary-general Lim Guan Eng (below).

dap special meeting 110313 lim guan eng "DAP will not stand idly by and watch Malaysians persecuted and victimised merely for exercising their fundamental human rights of expressing their political beliefs," he said in a statement yesterday.

Last week Immigration Department director-general Alias Ahmad reportedly said that his department will cancel the passports of 6,564 Malaysians who have been blacklisted.

According to him, most of them were convicted of drug-related crimes or other crimes, as well as those contravening immigration laws overseas,.

However, those who participate in demonstrations abroad had also been included.

He added that the two Malaysians who had their Singapore work visas revoked after participating in a demonstration there have been found guilty of contravening Singapore's immigration laws.

Although Alias denied an earlier news report quoting him as citing Section 8 of the Immigration Act 1959/63 or the Passports Act 1966 to support the decision, he maintained that the department has the power to do so based on the case law of federal government vs Loh Wai Kong, 1979.

Caught between rock and a hard place?

NONE Lim described Alias' (right) statement as a mockery of the rights of Malaysians and any attempt to revoke Malaysian passports who are overseas is unlawful.

He cited former Bar Council president and Bersih 2.0 co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan who has pointed out that the Immigration Department has not been bestowed with that right, according to a 2009 Federal Court ruling that had disapproved such a decision in 1979.

"Although Alias has now promised to make further clarifications next week, DAP demands that Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak immediately make the government's stand clear and reassure Malaysians that their rights will not be revoked simply for dissenting peacefully.

"Such a threat is not only against natural justice, undemocratic and an act of political retribution but also goes against the very grain of national reconciliation that has been proposed by Najib himself," said the Penang chief minister.

Lim said he will direct the DAP legal team headed by Puchong MP Gobind Singh to get the party's lawyers to take up cases of any Malaysian whose passport had been revoked for supporting Pakatan Rakyat or for their opposition to the BN.

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