

## **Was Uthaya jailed twice for same offence?**

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PKR vice-president Tian Chua has pondered out aloud on whether Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) leader P Uthayakumar was jailed twice for the same offence.

Uthayakumar was convicted of sedition yesterday and jailed for two and a half years. He was also incarcerated for 514 days under the Internal Security Act (ISA) in December 2007.

NONEChua pointed out that his detention under ISA came soon after Uthayakumar wrote a letter to then British prime minister Gordon Brown.

The content of the letter was the basis for the sedition charge.

"Uthayakumar has already served two years under the ISA for allegedly seditious activity. Is he being sentenced twice for the same charge?" asked Chua in a press release today.

At the time, the police and the government had, among others, claimed that Hindraf had links with South Asian terrorist groups and were inciting the Indian community to rebel against the government. Both these claims were never proven in court.

Chua said it was a "very sad and heartbreaking" moment to learn of Uthayakumar's incarceration.

"While we may not totally agree with him, the punishment meted out is severe and perceived to be selective in nature," said Chua.

He also accused Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak of not keeping his pledge to replace the Sedition Act 1948 and criticised him for using this law to silence dissidents.

The Batu MP himself is facing two sedition charges in recent months - one for his comments on the Lahad Datu incursion by Sulu intruders and another for remarks at a forum on May 13.

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