

Isa: Only lawbreakers fear Sedition Act

MalaysiaKini.com

July 10, 2013

By Ahmad Fadli KC

Jempol MP Isa Samad believes that only lawbreakers are worried about Sedition Act 1948 and want it repealed.

"If we look at the current situation, it is okay if we don't amend the law. Those who want it amended are those who are afraid.

"If we don't break the law, we won't be afraid," Isa told Malaysiakini at the Parliament lobby today.

Isa said this when asked to chime in on the ongoing public debate on the Sedition Act, which Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak promised would be replaced with a National Harmony Act.

NONEHowever, the Sedition Act continues to be used against dissidents, such as activists Adam Adli Abdul Halim, Haris Ibrahim, Tamrin Ghafar, P Uthayakumar and Batu MP Tian Chua (left).

Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has openly said that he does not support the repeal of the Act because it protects four core issues enshrined in the federal constitution.

Zahid outlined the four core issues as the special rights of the Malays, the status of the Malay rulers, status of Islam as the religion of the federation and the status of Bahasa Melayu as the national language.

As such, Zahid said, the cabinet can not abolish the law, but it can propose that the law be amended.

Check and balance

Labis MP Chua Tee Yong said regardless of whether the law is amended or a new law is introduced, there must be measures in place to ensure that such laws are not abused.

"If there are check-and-balance mechanisms and that the law is not used for (the wrong) agenda, I believe most MPs, including me, will agree it to.

NONEChua (left) said that backbenchers do not support all laws blindly, citing their recent objections against certain proposed amendments the Administration of Religion of Islam (Federal Territories) Bill.

Meanwhile, Federal Territories Minister Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansor appeared supportive of the Sedition Act, but said that any decision was best left to the Home Ministry.

"When we had the Emergency Ordinance 1969 and Internal Security Act 1964, people would think twice before they do something.

"Now that we've abolished the laws, people don't care. Let's leave it to the Home Ministry. They know better," he said.

Meanwhile, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Shahidan Kassim also threw his weight behind Zahid against doing away with the Sedition Act.

"In this matter, I support the home minister's statement because he knows about this matter," he told Malaysiakini when queried on his stance.

He added that the government should be flexible in considering the people's demands but it has to consider security over emotions.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/235199>