

## **Contradictory gov't claims on crime rate**

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**By Lim Kit Siang**

MP SPEAKS Is Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi now confirming that the prime minister, police and previous home minister have been wrong and that the public have been right over the past four years in relation to the worsening crime situation and fear of crime?

NONEAt the beginning of this month, Ahmad Zahid (right) and the police took a new tack on the crime situation, as illustrated by his speech last Sunday proposing the restoration of a special preventive law to replace the abolished Emergency Ordinance (EO).

"We were pressured to abolish the Internal Security Act and EO. Look at what happened after that, the crime rate increased, and organised and petty criminals came out of the woodwork," he reportedly said.

Although this is in tandem with public perception about the runaway crime situation, it is in direct conflict with the four-year stand by the premier, the police and Hishammuddin Hussein - they have said that the Government Transformation Programme (GTP) against crime has been a great success since its in 2009, resulting in the drastic fall in the crime rate.

Just before Parliament was dissolved for the 13th general election, Malaysians were told that the crime index had decreased by 26.8 percent under the first phase of the GTP and that Malaysia had been ranked the safest and most peaceful country in Southeast Asia, according to the Global Peace Index.

Malaysians were told that the country recorded around 550.1 criminal incidents per 100,000 population, placing Malaysia lower than Singapore, Hong Kong, Britain and the US.

What then is Malaysia's problem? The official answer is: "The crime rate is down but Malaysians still do not feel so, hence the focus of the second phase of the GTP against crime will be on improving public confidence on safety."

This was why RM272.5 million was allocated in Budget 2013 to ensure that the rakyat feel safe.

So, who is right?

In fact, this claim of relentless fall in the crime rate continued to be the official stance after GE13, with Najib Abdul Razak reiterating in his 'war against crime' speech on June 8 that the crime rate has been falling since the GTP programme against crime.

azlanHe also said: "In April this year, the crime rate dropped by 3.1 percent compared to the same period last year."

But earlier this month, the new home minister and the new police chief seemed to have decided to ditch all the claims about the success of GTP programme, and instead said the the country is afflicted with a rising crime rate. This was to justify the restoration of an EO-like preventive law.

But where are these new crime statistics?

Is Zahid now confirming that the premier, police and previous home minister were wrong and the public were right?

This is a question I put to Zahid when he was winding up the debate on the royal address in Parliament yesterday, but he did not give any satisfactory answer.

Is Zahid prepared to be frank and forthright to state whether Malaysians have been fed false and wrong crime statistics over the past four years?

If so, what assurance can he give that Malaysians will henceforth be given the right and correct statistics about the crime situation?

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