

Dr M's ex-deputy rejects ISA revival

MalaysiaKini.com

Jan 13, 2014

Dr Mahathir Mohamad has always championed the need for the Internal Security Act on the grounds of safeguarding national security.

Recently, the former premier called on the Najib administration to revive the now defunct law and this was supported by Inspector-General of Police Khalid Abu Bakar.

However, one of Mahathir's former deputies rejected this.

Musa Hitam (left), who retired in 1986, a year before Mahathir launched the infamous ISA dragnet codenamed "Ops Lalang", said reviving the law will have negative implications on the present government.

He said any move to bring back the ISA will give the impression that the government does not have the confidence to defend its decision made previously.

"The issue now is not a law or a certain Act that needs to be introduced or implemented, but the real issue is the method that we use in implementing or enforcing the existing law.

"Malaysia actually has achieved its own level of progress when the government announced the decision to abolish the ISA, so where is the necessity to bring back the ISA?" Musa is quoted as saying by Bernama.

Musa said the country's security forces today are mature enough to face the various provocations and this was proven by their successes in tackling whatever crises that had cropped up.

"We have seen that the existing security forces are capable of resolving the various crises and tackling the threats. Certainly, all these have given them the maturity to enforce the law," he said.

As such, he felt there was no necessity to bring back the ISA, on the other hand, the focus should be on the aspects of implementing and enforcing existing laws.

DAP: Najib must break silence

Apart from Musa, DAP vice-chairperson Teresa Kok and Gerakan president Mah Siew Keong today denounced the ISA, which was repealed in 2011, as a violation of human rights.

However, Kok (right) - who was detained under the ISA in 2008 - said what Malaysians are waiting for is a clear signal from the prime minister that the ISA will not return.

While it is good that there are those within Umno, like cabinet minister Abdul Rahman Dahlan who say that the ISA belongs in the past, she said Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has remained silent on the matter.

"He has disappointed Malaysians with his continued silence on the Selangor Islamic Affairs Department's (Jais) illegal raid on the Bible Society of Malaysia, he should not keep silent on the calls to bring back ISA.

"I urge the prime minister to immediately, publicly and clearly state that there will not be a reintroduction of the draconian ISA," she added in a statement.

She also stressed on the police chief to heed the remarks of Attorney-General Abdul Gani Patail last year that police should not be "addicted" to preventive detention.

Gerakan: Existing laws enough

Meanwhile, Mah said reintroducing the ISA was not required as the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (Sosma), the Prevention of Crime Act (PCA), the Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code are sufficient to ensure national safety.

Mah (left) added that as Malaysia becomes a developed nation, the government should learn to respect the "maturing civil society" and commit to "human and civil rights enhancements".

He urged against "the unruly rise of McCarthyism that is evident with the prevailing practice of making unfair allegations and unfounded political criticism".

Responding to Mahathir's proposal last Friday, IGP Khalid had said he "wishes and hopes" that the government will bring back the ISA so the police could use it "ensure harmony", although he declined to elaborate how.

Previously, Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi gave his assurance that the

government will not revive the ISA, which allowed for preventive detention on the orders of the home minister.

Since its repeal in 2011, the government has introduced amendments to the PCA, which also allow detention for two years without a full trial.

However, the government argued that the PCA is not like ISA as suspects are detained for investigation and that detention powers no longer lie with the minister but with an independent panel.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
Source: <http://beta.malaysiakini.com/news/251694>