

Najib bowing to Dr M with recent crackdowns?

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Are the recent crackdowns by the government an attempt to placate former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his attack on current Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's administration as "too soft", asks Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM).

The series of sedition charges against opposition politicians and the the mass arrests in Penang yesterday came shortly after Mahathir's stinging criticism of Najib, PSM secretary-general S Arutchelvan (left) said today.

"Mahathir said he is withdrawing support to Najib, and even humiliated Najib by calling him as being soft.

"Mahathir has been critical that Najib did not manage to curb the opposition like during his tenure. Now, Najib seems to be showing that he also can be ruthless," Arutchelvan said in a statement.

Yesterday, police arrested 156 members of the Voluntary Patrol Unit, which was set up by the Penang government, claiming that it is an illegal organisation.

The arrests came amid at least five sedition charges against opposition politicians last week.

Arutchelvan slammed Najib for being inconsistent in his Merdeka eve message where he urged peace and prosperity but ended up arresting over a hundred people the next day.

'What about the extremists?'

Meanwhile, former Bar Council president Ambiga Sreenevasan (right) took to Twitter, lamenting that the government was turning against its own citizens instead of fighting actual crime.

"If you are truly concerned about the next generation, rein in the extremist groups and press and stop turning on your citizens," she said.

Former minister Zahid Ibrahim also condemned the government's accusation that PPS was dangerous, comparing it to the federal government's volunteer corps, Rela.

"Rela is not dangerous? They even assume the ranks normally given to the regular forces. Is this not dangerous?" he said in a Twitter posting.

The PPS, which is set up by the Penang government, is aimed at community policing.

Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi today insisted that matters of security was the federal government's prerogative and not the state government's.

Constitutional lawyer Abdul Aziz Bari (left) acknowledged that internal security was the federal government's jurisdiction but said the state government was merely filling a vacuum.

"To the best of my knowledge what happened in Penang is not really the case of PPS taking over the police job but rather a case of filling the gap left or ignored by the police," he said in a statement today.

"I think police have got the capacity (to fill the gap but) the problem is that they do things which are not really their job such as political surveillance as well as repelling foreign attacks which should have been done by the military," he added.

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