

**PM: Gov't won't replace Sedition Act in a hurry**  
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The government will not replace the controversial Sedition Act in a hasty manner, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said today.

The government, Najib declared, is still not decided as to whether to repeal or amend the Act.

He said any new Act that comes into place, must be "better" than the Sedition Act and be a "deterrent" to radicalism and "racial and religious extremists".

"The government will not hastily replace the Sedition Act 1948 with a new law without looking at all aspects, including the importance of prevention.

"The government will not take steps that can cause unrest. The country needs laws which can act as a deterrent to ensure national peace, harmony and stability," the prime minister said in a statement.

Najib had in 2012 promised to repeal the Act.

His statement today comes following a spate of arrests and charges of sedition in the past few months.

According to the PM, the government will continue to engage stakeholders before making its decision.

This, he said, includes consultations with Malay groups who are opposed to the repeal.

Malay, Islam and monarchy

"Based on the discussions and feedback received so far, there are four differing views on the Sedition Act:

To retain the Act with slight amendments;

To repeal it completely;

To replace with a National Harmony Act to safeguard unity and stability; and

To retain the Act while enacting the National Harmony Act."

Assuring the Malay groups, he said that any decision made will still safeguard the special position of Islam and the monarchy as well as the "special rights" of Malays, as stated in the Federal Constitution.

"All these provisions will be retained," he said.

He also reminded all that any drafts of the Bill that does not come from the Attorney-General's Chambers is "not valid and cannot be accepted".

While he did not specify, Najib could be referring to the draft of the National Harmony Bill proposed by the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC), uploaded onto the NUCC website.

The NUCC draft has elicited outcry from Malay rights group who are concerned over the NUCC's proposal to criminalise race-based discrimination.

NUCC (above), which uploaded the draft onto its website for public feedback has also been slammed by cabinet minister Abdul Rahman Dahlan for publicizing its draft without cabinet's approval.

The NUCC is under the purview of the Prime Minister's Department.