

## **'Sedition Act's replacement must have limited scope'**

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Any law that replaces the Sedition Act 1948 should be confined to criminalising the incitement of racial and religious violence, said Bar Council president Christopher Leong.

The legislation, he added, should also contain a provision that makes it an offence to espouse hatred towards the royal institution.

"We know that in multi-racial, multi-religious Malaysia there are some fault lines, but those fault lines must be managed not by vague and oppressive laws like the Sedition Act," he told reporters after leading a protest march against the Sedition Act.

He said any law that replaces the Act needs to encourage greater interaction and dialogue amongst Malaysians, which would in turn ensure peace, unity and harmony.

The law, he pointed out, should ensure that people would not be intimidated or threatened while participating in dialogues.

"Therefore, the replacement Act must be very narrow in scope, and it should only criminalise any incitement, threat, and acts of racial and religious violence.

"The Act should be confined to those elements alone, as well as also containing a provision whereby it will be an offence to bring into hatred the royal institution," he added.

The government had made a slew of arrests and charges under the Sedition Act this year, especially since August.

Those hauled up include politicians, activists, academics, and Malaysiakini journalist Susan Loone.

The Bar Council is urging the government to abolish the law and impose a moratorium on its further use until it is scrapped.

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