

Obama told to target M'sia in defending democracy

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Leading American daily Washington Post has reminded President Barack Obama that his call at the United Nations to defend democracy worldwide should start with Malaysia.

Recalling the president's speech at the UN in September a month before Malaysia was accepted into the ranks of the UN Security Council, the daily said to date Obama's talk of "an even stronger campaign" to defend countries with "relentless crackdowns" has but remained words.

"So far we haven't seen much follow-up on that promise, but the opportunities to do so are abundant.

"One of the most urgent lies in Malaysia, a US ally that has launched an extraordinary crackdown on opposition leaders, academics and journalists," wrote its editorial board in a comment piece yesterday.

In particular, the daily noted the ongoing persecution of opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim for sodomy was an "odious criminal case" that warranted Obama's attention to live up to his pledge.

The daily it was "not hard to guess why Mr. Najib might have broken his pledge" to improve democratic practices, pointing to how BN lost the majority popular vote during the last general election.

"Gerrymandering preserved the government's parliamentary majority, but the ruling establishment Prime Minister Najib Razak leads appears to have set out to crush the opposition before the next election, due in 2017," it said.

Obama may have made a subtle reference to Malaysia's racial issues during his first visit to the country, but he was cautious not comment about Malaysia's ongoing sedition dragnet and rising racism during Najib's visit to US in September.

The PM even boasted Malaysia topped the list of countries the US president had "praised".

Obama's inaugural visit to Malaysia in May was primarily to discuss the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) that the US hopes Malaysia will sign.

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