

PM makes U-turn, Sedition Act to stay and be fortified

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak announced that the Sedition Act will remain, prompting Umno delegates to give him a standing ovation.

The Umno president appears to have bowed to pressure from within the party not to replace the Act.

"Not only will this Act be retained, it will be fortified," he said to a thundering applause at the Umno General Assembly today.

Najib explained that the Act would be strengthened to protect Islam and other faiths as well as to deal with calls for secession of Sabah and Sarawak.

"Do you agree, do you agree, do you agree?" he repeated and delegates responded in the affirmative in a rapturous manner.

Najib said he had listened to suggestions given by Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin, Wanita Umno, Umno Youth and Puteri Umno, for the Act to be retained as well as concerns raised by the grassroots on the issue.

"As prime minister, I've decided that the Sedition Act will be retained," he said, to applause and cheers by the delegates.

Before announcing the decision, images of various "seditious" posts on social media were shown to Umno delegates, which include infamous couple Alvin Tan and Vivian Lee's breaking fast with bak kut teh greeting.

A cut clip showing activist Hishamuddin Rais repeating the word "hasut" (incite) was also played.

Meanwhile, Najib said that he was confident that other Barisan Nasional component parties were with Umno on the matter.

However, he stressed that enforcement must be fair, in order to create a Malaysia that is more "peaceful, stable and harmonious".

Najib's announcement is an about-turn on his pledge in July 2012, when he announced that the Sedition Act will be repealed and replaced with a new act to be known as the National Harmony Act.

Former Information minister Zainuddin Maidin had predicted yesterday that the prime

minister will revert on his decision to replace the Sedition Act with the Harmony Act due to increasing opposition from within the party.

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