

MP: Najib heeded voice of extremists, not the people

MalaysiaKini.com

Dec 5, 2014

PKR slammed former PM Dr Mahathir Mohamad off for hailing the prime minister's Sedition Act U-turn as a triumph of the voice of the people, saying it was instead the voice of the "extremists".

"Dr Mahathir today lauded PM Najib Razak for 'listening to the voice of the people' in retaining the Sedition Act 1948. This is a dishonest and hypocritical claim by Mahathir.

"The retention of this unjust colonialist law had nothing with the voice of the people.

"There is no doubt Najib caved in to the voices of extremists and right-wingers in Umno in breaking his promise to the people made two years ago to repeal the Act," said PKR lawmaker N Surendran in a statement today.

Mahathir posted his brief congratulations today on his blog before launching on an attack on the debt-ridden 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) and the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA).

Najib raised a standing ovation at the recently concluded Umno AGM when he announced that he has abandoned his promise to abolish the Sedition Act made in 2012 before the last general election.

Civil society and the opposition however blasted the PM for going back on his promise in dismantling the legacy of the colonial British meant to stamp out dissent from the locals.

'Dr M sowed seeds of oppression'

Surendran said Mahathir's reaction was no surprise as Najib had buckled to pressure that had been building up prior to the Umno AGM.

"Mahathir, Umno right-wingers and extremist NGOs like Perkasa and Isma built up divisive and racial rhetoric in the run-up to the Umno assembly, resulting in Najib's embarrassing U-turn on the Sedition Act.

"The Malaysian people are against this oppressive law which stifles the voices of opposition elected representatives, civil society, activists and the public," said Surendran.

"Mahathir's support for repressive laws like the Sedition Act and ISA is well-known," he added, recalling the former premier's 22-year rule "notorious for authoritarianism and intolerance for the human rights of the people".

The Padang Serai MP pointed out that while Mahathir claims to speak in the interest of the country and particularly the Malays, the latter has remained "poor and in debt".

"But Mahathir's own family have become fabulously rich; his son Mokhzani Mahathir (right) is among the top 10 richest persons in Malaysia, with billions in assets," he said.

He called on the people to "reject the voices of oppressors like Mahathir and other extremists and right-wingers who play upon race and religion in order to further their narrow and selfish agendas".

Surendran, a human rights lawyer, has been charged for sedition and is facing another probe, over comments made in connection with his client and party de facto president Anwar Ibrahim's Sodomy II appeal.

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