

'Shame!' - Dr M joins with Ku Li, big guns to slam Sosma arrests

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Radzi Razak

Former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad today linked arms with rival Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah to condemn the use of the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act (Sosma) against 1MDB critic Khairuddin Abu Hassan and his lawyer Matthias Chang.

In a joint statement clearly referring to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, the BN big guns said it was “shameful” for someone accused of a wrongdoing not to defend himself but to persecute others instead.

The statement was jointly issued by the Mahathir, Tengku Razaleigh, Umno deputy president Muhyiddin Yassin, Umno vice-president Shafie Apdal, former Kedah menteri besar Sanusi Junid and former MCA presidents Ong Tee Keat and Dr Ling Liong Sik.

However, Ling was not at the press conference the others held in Putrajaya this morning.

“To the sound mind, the (Sosma arrests) show that when someone lodges a report on a wrongdoing, all laws will be used to cover-up that wrongdoing.

“Isn’t it shameful when someone who is accused of a crime does not do anything to prove his innocence, but instead the person lodging the report on the wrongdoing is arrested,” the BN big guns said.

They also demand the duo's immediate release.

However, the group did not name Najib, who is chairperson of the 1MDB board of advisers.

Khairuddin, who has lodged reports against 1MDB locally and abroad, was today charged with allegedly sabotaging the country's banking and financial system.

Chang, who acted as his legal counsel, was jointly charged with him.

Having interrupted the press conference to read aloud a breaking news alert by Malaysiakini on the charge of Khairuddin and Chang, Mahathir (photo) said the charge is mind-boggling.

"How can these two, who are not rich, sabotage the financial and banking system?"

"The use of this new law is meant to be for terrorists, but it is clear that the government is using this law for all kinds of things, especially against those who criticise the government.

“So they are defining sabotage according to their own will and needs, without adhering to purpose of laws,” he told reporters.

Mahathir called for the immediate release of Khairuddin and Chang and for Sosma not to be abused.

"The government should respond by releasing those people. Don't detain people under Sosma because that's not what Sosma is for.

"Sosma is for terrorists. Do you think Matthias or Khairuddin are terrorists? They merely reported some misdeeds of the government to the foreign authorities.

"They just reported what they think is a crime. For reporting that, you are questioned and detained? That is an abuse of power," Mahathir said.

Ku Li: I'm joining Dr M because the gov't is wrong

Tengku Razaleigh joined the chorus by saying that the detention of the two was a step back for the country, after the abolition of the Internal Security Act (ISA).

The ISA was previously used, including by the Mahathir administration, to detain political dissidents without trial.

Seen as a rival to Mahathir after the 1980s Umno leadership crisis, the Gua Musang MP (photo, left), said he was speaking with together with the former prime minister today as he feels that the government's action is wrong.

"It has denied the right of those concerned from having access to legal representation... we are talking about being a developed state, but we don't seem to have matured.

"We go back to this Third World kind of legislation, where you can detain people without representation and I think this is wrong," he said, Tengku Razaleigh.