

Unlike ISA, Khairuddin can defend himself, Salleh tells Dr M
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While Dr Mahathir Mohamad condemned the use of Security Offences (Special Measures) Act (Sosma) against 1MDB critics, a minister reminded the former prime minister of the use of the Internal Security Act (ISA) on dissidents during his time.

At least former Umno division leader Khairuddin Abu Hassan and his lawyer Matthias Chang (photo) are being allowed a trial where they can defend themselves, and if they are not guilty, will be freed, said Communications and Multimedia Minister Salleh Said Keruak.

"During Mahathir's term as prime minister, he used the ISA on dissidents and critics of the government where there was no trial.

"In 2001, 10 of Anwar Ibrahim's supporters were detained without trial on allegations that they were terrorists. Six were made to serve two years under detention and the court later ruled that they were not terrorists and that their detention was illegal," Salleh said in a blog post today.

Mahathir today linked arms with rival Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah to condemn the use of Sosma against Khairuddin and 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 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.

Telling the truth can get you jailed

Responding to Mahathir's press conference, Salleh said it has not been established yet whether what Khairuddin and Chang had said is the truth, so let the trial determine this.

"Anyway, of all people, should know that the truth is subjective and just because one tells the truth that does not mean one has not broken any laws.

"Mahathir must be reminded of many cases during his time, when people who told the truth were arrested, charged and convicted for the crime of telling the truth."

Salleh cited the example of a former Parti Keadilan Nasional leader Marina Yusoff who was convicted and sentenced under the Sedition Act in 2000 for telling the truth and the judge ruled that just because she told the truth does not mean she is not guilty of a crime.

"Under the Sedition Act, telling the truth can actually get you jailed, the court reminded the defence," Salleh added.

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