

Dr M: Gov't broke its promise by detaining Maria under Sosma
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The government has broken its promise not to abuse the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (Sosma) by detaining Bersih chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah under that act, said former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"That written promise is ignored by the very government which promulgated this law," Mahathir said in a press conference at the Perdana Leadership Foundation today.

He said that then de facto law minister Nazri Aziz had promised in Parliament in 2012 that nobody will be arrested or detained under Sosma solely for their political beliefs or activities.

However, Mahathir added, the government is now using this law wrongfully to detain Maria, whom he said has done nothing to deserve to be put in solitary confinement.

"It is not usual for a person, before they have been charged or convicted, to be put into solitary confinement," he said, pointing out that Maria has not been charged in court yet.

Not only that, he said, Maria did not deserve to be detained under Sosma in the first place, as that law is meant for terrorists or those who plan to commit acts of terror.

"I cannot imagine Maria undertaking any acts of terror," he said.

All Maria was fighting for was for the country to have clean governance and for free and fair elections, which is why he decided to join Bersih in the first place, Mahathir said.

He knows there will be those who say similar things happened during his tenure as prime minister, he said.

"Those were different cases. Nobody was arrested and immediately thrown into cell (in my time).

"This is unique because Maria has not been charged and not brought before the court," he said.

Maria was arrested under Sosma a day before the Bersih 5 rally on Saturday.

She is currently being held in Kuala Lumpur under solitary confinement for up to 28 days.

Maria's family submitted a habeas corpus application to the Kuala Lumpur High Court earlier today, to compel the police to release her from the 28-day detention order.

Police are investigating Bersih under Section 124C of the Penal Code for attempts to carry

out activities detrimental to parliamentary democracy.

This is after it was revealed that the electoral watchdog received funds from the Open Society Foundations, which is linked to billionaire George Soros.

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