

Scarred by ISA ordeal, DAP MP inks memo to home minister on Sosma

Malaysiakini

20 December 2022

Puteri Aisya Sufian

Fifteen years ago, V Ganabatirau, who is now the MP for Klang, was among the five Hindraf leaders held under the now-defunct Internal Security Act (ISA).

“I was detained without trial for 455 days.

“I know what these men have gone through and it upsets me that people still believe that Sosma shouldn’t be abolished,” he told reporters.

The DAP lawmaker was referring to the controversial Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (Sosma), which replaced the ISA.

Ganabatirau and two other Pakatan Harapan MPs, Chiew Choon Man and RSN Rayer, had inked a memorandum to Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail requesting bail for Sosma detainees and for the legislation to be reviewed.

Rights group Suaram representatives and families of the detainees had gathered

outside Parliament this morning to submit the memorandum, which was received by Saifuddin's aide.

Pledging to pursue the matter with the minister because he wanted "justice and fair trial for the detainees", Ganabatirau said: "The appropriate question is whether or not it breaches human rights to arrest people without reason or evidence."

Meanwhile, Suaram coordinator Azura Nasron described Sosma as "tyrannical".

"Sosma gives the police the power to arrest people for 28 days without charging them in court and denying them bail.

"But many of the people here claim they have not heard about their arrested relatives for months," she added.

Those present were families of 57 individuals accused of being members of "Geng Sakai" and "Geng 08 GST", who have been in the Sungai Buloh prison since June 2021 and 2022 respectively.

Both groups are set to face trial in court in 2024 after being charged under the Penal Code.

Review provisions in the law

In the memorandum, the families requested Saifuddin to review provisions in the law, which are deemed to be unjust and argued that Sosma detentions run foul of the Federal Constitution.

It was also alleged that most of the individuals were arrested without being charged or re-arrested without reason.

The memorandum also highlighted the negative effects of Sosma on families as most of the detainees come from lower-income backgrounds or were the sole breadwinners.

Coming from Sungai Petani, Kedah, a detainee's sister, who wished to be identified only as Nirmala, told reporters that her brother was detained in September 2020.

She was informed that he was being taken in for questioning but she did not see him again for six months.

"My younger brother is an auxiliary police officer. He came home at 2am after work and got arrested at 7am when the police barged into my house," Nirmala

said, adding that she is still in the dark over the reasons he was detained under Sosma.

Meanwhile, Azura clarified that calling for Sosma to be abolished does not mean that the families are encouraging criminal activities.

“However, it is not doing any good when the restrictions are lax. I don't know why the minister won't look into it. People's rights are being disrespected easily,” she said.

Copyright © 1999-2012 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd

Source: <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/648788>