

## **MP tells 'progressive' Anwar to copy Dr M's Sedition Act moratorium**

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A veteran PKR MP has urged Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's administration to reinstate a moratorium on the use of the Sedition Act 1948, first imposed during Pakatan Harapan's first stint in government under former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Pasir Gudang MP Hassan Abdul Karim, a vocal critic of the Sedition Act, said while there were many weaknesses surrounding Harapan's first round of federal power, a moratorium on sedition probes was enforced up until its downfall in February 2022.

"So I believe that the 'more reformist' Madani government under prime minister Anwar should be more progressive compared to Mahathir.

"I propose for the Madani government led by Anwar to emulate Harapan 1.0 under Mahathir and enforce an immediate moratorium on the use of the Sedition Act 1948," Hassan (above, right) told Malaysiakini today.

He was responding to the latest sedition probe against lawyer Muhammad Rafique Rashid Ali over the Pejuang information chief's speech that labelled Anwar a "scammer" over alleged unfulfilled promises, delivered during an anti-government rally in June.

Rafique, an organiser of the "Rakyat Lawan Anwar" rally, said the Kangar district police had contacted him over a report lodged in Perlis by an NGO over his speech dubbed "Scammer, Scammer, Anwar Scammer".

Use more appropriate law

Commenting further, Hassan, who is also a lawyer, said the Sedition Act goes against basic principles of criminal law that requires the establishment of "intent" behind an alleged offence.

"If the police wanted to open an investigation paper on Rafique, it would be more just and professional for them to use the Penal Code, for example, Section 505(b)," he added.

Section 505 of the Penal Code criminalises the creation, publication or circulation of any statement, rumour or report, with various intentions.

Section 505(b) refers to intention to cause, or which is likely to cause, fear or

alarm to the public, or to any section of the public whereby any person may be induced to commit an offence against the state or the public tranquillity.

Earlier this month, Hassan was among government backbenchers who accepted a memorandum from civil society organisations that endorsed a call for the prime minister to fulfil Harapan's promise of repealing the British-era law.

Home Minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail in March said the cabinet had given him the green light to proceed with proposed amendments to the Sedition Act, but it was intended to help the government curtail the provocations on 3R (race, religion, royalty) issues.

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