



Independent MPs tick gov't off over Zunar's arrest
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The group of five Independent MPs have questioned the arrest political satirist Zulkiflee Anwar Ulhaque last week, saying it only makes the government look bad.

In an uncharacteristic statement issued by the BN-friendly group, which calls itself the Independent Consensus, the MPs said the arrest gives the perception of a government that does not tolerate dissent and will resort to bullying to stop the spread of opinions that go against its official stand.

The arrest of Zulkiflee, better known as Zunar, and efforts to block his new book 'Cartoon-o-phobia', also puts a bad rap on premier Najib Abdul Razak who recently offered help to US President Barack Obama to manage Islamophobia.



It is still unclear whether Zunar was arrested under the Sedition Act or the Printing Presses and Publications Act, or whether or not the Home Ministry has banned the book, said the group.

"It should be left to the rakyat to decide whether to accept or reject art works through market forces."

"The Independent Consensus is of the opinion that authors should be given reasonable amount of space to be creative. However, we appeal to them to be sensitive towards the multicultural society," they said.

'Limits to artistic licence'

The group comprises Bayan Baru MP Zahrain Hashim, Nibong Tebal MP Tan Tee Beng, Bagan Serai MP Mohsin Samsuri, Kulim-Bandar Baharu MP Zulkifli Noordin and Wangsa Maju MP Wee Choo Keong.

All former PKR parliamentarians, they also said artists must understand that their work of art is not a 'licence' for them to do as they like.

"With great power comes with great responsibility and there are limits to art. Let's not hide behind the name of art to defame, to slur or to lie in order to (create) religious or racial disharmony, more so to tarnish someone's personality."

They added that, in the Information Age, banning books is obsolete as information is free and easily available from alternative sources online.

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