



**Nazri: RPK will be safe if he returns
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De facto Law Minister Nazri Aziz today gave an assurance to Raja Petra Kamaruddin that he will be safe if he returns to Malaysia.

"Why did he run away? Just like the Thai witness (pathologist Dr Pornthip Rojanasunand) in the Teoh Beng Hock case, who claimed her life was under threat... but she came and returned safely," he told a press conference.

"This (fear for safety) is just an excuse to not cooperate... Malaysia is not a banana republic."

Nazri (*left*) stressed that rather than jumping bail, Raja Petra, better known as RPK, should instead share his information with the authorities.

"I hope he can help us.. I would prefer if he comes back and faces the charges against him, and plays the game according to the rules," he said.

Nazri said it is up to the public to judge whether what RPK writes is true or otherwise, but pointed out that the fugitive blogger should not make things more difficult for the authorities than they already are.

"There is some good to it (RPK's blog postings) because at least the MACC (Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission) can act on it if it's true.

"But if you do things this way, people will get confused and it will make it difficult for the MACC to do its work. If any investigation is launched, it will spook the witnesses and evidence would be destroyed, among other things," he said.

No trial by media, please

On the Sosilawati Lawiya quadruple murders, Nazri urged the media to hold fast to their ethics and the cause of justice in reporting on the high-profile case.

Asked to comment on the actions of several news organisations that ran footage of the murder suspects without blurring out their faces, he stressed that the responsibility falls on the media, and not the government, to regulate their own content.

"We in the government would appreciate it if self-censorship is practised by the media themselves because if we do it, it would be seen as blocking media freedom.

"Let's not have a trial by media. We want to make sure that there is justice for all, including the families of the victims and the accused... In this country, you are innocent until proven guilty," he said.

When asked about the recent statement by National Union of Journalists president Hata Wahari (*right*) that *Utusan Malaysia* practised poor ethics ever since it was bought over by Umno in the 1960s, Nazri said the former



was entitled to his opinion.

"What we see now is that the media is more open than before, and that would only help make things better.

"The only limitation to this is that it does not mean freedom to lie, and as long as it does not infringe on the rights of a third party," he said.

'We still need ISA'

Earlier, during a forum with UiTM students in Shah Alam, Nazri said the Internal Security Act (ISA) is still needed to keep the nation secure from terrorist threats.

Recounting a visit he made with opposition MPs to the Kamunting detention centre, he said it only reinforced his belief that the ISA remains relevant in Malaysia.

"One detainee named Yazid asked to speak to me personally, and he had been detained for around four years.

"He told me why he was detained, because he wanted to build a Muslim nation in South-East Asia comprising Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Southern Thailand and Mindanao.

"I told him that Islam does not say to blow up churches and temples, it does not agree to killing non-Muslims unless it is war. To this he said, 'It's fine Datuk, you have your view and I have mine. You can detain me for another seven, eight years and my view won't change'.

"Knowing that he will immediately continue doing what he was detained for in the first place if I let him go, how can I release him? That is why we still need the ISA," he stressed.

Nazri pointed out, however, that the act should not be used to serve political interests and that any detention should not be made over a long period.



Responding to a question by a student, he said the government is still studying what action it can take against controversial artist Namewee for his recent video '*Nah!*', which attacked two principals who had allegedly uttered racist remarks at their schools in Johor and Kedah.

Nazri noted that they are not sure if they can charge the artist for sedition as it would require him to explicitly incite racial tension, when Namewee was in fact responding to the actions of the two headmistresses.

"I agree that in any racial issue, we must take swift action but at the same time we must be careful. When taking action we must be 90 percent confident of winning, because if the courts release the accused the effects would be worse," he said.

