

Why can't the 'reform cabinet' set them free?

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When Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi unveiled his new team two weeks ago in the wake of Barisan Nasional's worst ever electoral setback, it was touted as the 'reform cabinet'. MCPX

This appeared to be more spin than fact, said opposition leader Lim Kit Siang, who is DAP parliamentarian for Ipoh Timor.

According to him, the government has failed to do the one thing which could signal that it is firmly on the path of reform - the release of five Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) leaders who are held under the Internal Security Act (ISA), which allows for detention without trial.

Last Monday, Home Minister Syed Hamid Albar, the man who has the powers to sign the release orders for Hindraf 5, has adamantly rejected the move.

He even ticked off S Samy Vellu for the MIC leader's sudden U-turn on the ISA detention in demanding the release of the five activists.

"Hamid Albar has single-handedly destroy Abdullah's reputation that he is belatedly delivering his reform pledges by his refusal to immediately releasing the five Hindraf leaders," said Lim.

"In obstinately refusing to accede to demands for the immediate and unconditional release of the Hindraf 5 - even without calling for an instant review of the ISA detention of the Hindraf 5 - Hamid is showing utter contempt of the verdict of the Malaysian voters in the March 8 'political tsunami'."

Mano can't attend swearing-in ceremony

hindraf isa detainees 141207 updatedIn making the 'free Hindraf 5' call on Sunday, Samy Vellu - who was once highly critical of Hindraf - denied that it was a publicity stunt.

The Hindraf leaders detained under the tough security law are P Uthayakumar, V Ganabatirau, M Manoharan, T Vasantha Kumar and R Kengadharan.

The five were arrested shortly after organising a mammoth street rally which drew some 30,000 disgruntled Indians to the streets in Kuala Lumpur on Nov 25 last year.

In the March 8 polls, Manoharan - one of the Hindraf 5 - won the Kota Alam Shah state seat in Selangor, which he contested under a DAP ticket.

Syed Hamid has yesterday rejected Manoharan's application to enable him to attend the swearing-in ceremony for elected state representatives.

Manoharan and his four Hindraf colleagues are being held in Taiping's detention camp.

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