

**Overall law reform vital, Zaid told
Malaysiakini.com
Apr 4, 2008**

Law minister Mohd Zaid Ibrahim should not set his sights only on reforming the judiciary but also to consider taking a human rights approach to law reform. MCPX

charles santiago water bill issue 020207 talkStating this today, Klang MP Charles Santiago also called on Zaid to take "the most significant step" towards that end by working on the abolition of the Internal Security Act (ISA).

"Detention without trial deprives people's rights to be on trial before the court, because one is innocent until one has been sentenced by a judge," he said in a statement.

"That's the spirit of law," he added.

Santiago also called for the release of ISA detainee and fellow DAP member M Manoharan so that he can represent the Kota Alam Shah state constituency in the Selangor legislative assembly.

Manoharan was one of five Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) leaders imprisoned last December after the group spearheaded public protests against allegedly state-sanctioned ethnic discrimination and marginalisation.

Despite being behind bars, Manoharan was voted during the March 8 polls to the Kota Alam Shah state assembly seat.

Pak Lah's responsibility

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi - who, as then internal security ministry signed the detention orders for the 'Hindraf 5' - should not continue to deprive the Kota Alam Shah community their 'voice' by the continued detention of Manoharan, said Santiago.

hindraf isa detainees 141207"All five Hindraf leaders were detained during Abdullah's term as internal security minister. It's Abdullah's responsibility now to release the five Hindraf leaders to portray a reformed cabinet.

"The Klang community will be very upset if their elected representative, who won with a 7000 strong majority, is not able to return and serve their community.

"The BN federal government has no right to ignore the community's voice by (arbitrarily) continuing to detain their assemblyman without trial", he added.

Santiago also rebutted Malacca Chief Minister Mohd Ali Rustam who had recently labelled the Hindraf leaders as threats to national security.

The Hindraf leaders were merely fighting for Indians to be accorded basic religious and human rights that are guaranteed by the Federal Constitution as these had been ignored by the BN-led government, said Santiago.

He also noted that even leading figures within BN component parties MIC and MCA have

called for the release of the Hindraf 5.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news//80874>