

Letter to PM : release Hindraf 5
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The International Bar Association Human Rights Institute has expressed concern over the continued detention of five leaders of the Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf), under the Internal Security Act (ISA).

In a letter to premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the institute called for the release of P Uthayakumar, M Manoharan, V Ganabathirau, R Kenghadharan, and T Vasanthakumar.

hindraf isa detainees 141207 updated They were detained on Dec 13 last year after organising a street protest in Kuala Lumpur on Nov 25 against the "marginalisation and discrimination" of Indian Malaysians, who were brought to Malaya as indentured labour during British colonial rule.

The institute expressed concern that the detention of the Hindraf 5 – on grounds that they had undermined national security and public order - "may be arbitrary and unlawful" and not based on fact.

It also believes that the detainees have been linked without evidence to a terrorist organisation and that the use of the ISA in this way could indicate abuse of process.

The International Bar Association, established in 1947, is the world's leading organisation of international legal practitioners, bar associations and law societies.

The institute further pointed out the need for the government to comply with Article 22 of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

This stipulates that sick prisoners who require treatment should be transferred to specialised institutions or hospitals with suitable trained officers.

"We request that urgent medical attention should be made immediately available to all detainees if required," it said.

hindraf vasanthakumar hospital visit 180408 v.vishaleny Hindraf legal advisor P Uthayakumar was admitted to hospital earlier this month after allegedly being denied medication for diabetes over the past month. He was said to have been forced to consume food high in sugar and starch since the start of his detention.

Last Friday, Vasanthakumar (photo) was allowed to visit his sick four-year-old daughter at the Cheras Pantai Medical Centre where she had been warded for viral fever.

On April 2, the Federal Court began hearing an appeal against the Kuala Lumpur High Court's decision to quash an application by the five detainees, seeking their freedom.