

MIC Youth: Explain why Hindraf 5 not freed
Malaysiakini.com
Apr 24, 2008

MIC Youth has called on the government to review the Internal Security Act (ISA) detention of the five Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) leaders.
MCPX

sa vigneswaranIn a statement today, MIC Youth chief SA Vigneswaran said the five should be freed if they are no longer considered a security threat.

"At that material time, the decision (to arrest) was warranted for if every demand is taken to the street then the democratic process will be in jeopardy and this will lead to chaos.

"But now when we go down (to the ground), the true sentiment is that they feel that these people were punished for asking for their rights.

"And because this was reflected in the general election result, they feel that the government is not adhering to their sentiments," he added.

hindraff isa detainees 141207Vigneswaran said if the five are still considered a threat then it is incumbent on the home minister to be transparent and explain the reasons for their continued detention.

He also suggested that the five could be released with conditions if there is a need for this.

The five leaders were detained on Dec 13, shortly after Hindraf had organised a mammoth rally which drew some 30,000 people to the streets in Kuala Lumpur.

Those detained are P Uthayakumar, V Ganabatirau, R Kenghadharan, M Manoharan and T Vasantha Kumar.

Manoharan had also won the Kota Alam Shah state seat in the March 8 elections which he contested from behind bars under a DAP ticket.

Religious conversion

Meanwhile, MIC Youth also recorded its appreciation to Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi over his recent decision concerning the issue of religious conversion.

The premier had said that those seeking to convert to Islam must inform their family beforehand.

Apart from this, Vigneswaran appealed to the premier to also enforce a rule for prospective converts to obtain a "release certificate" from recognised religious bodies such as the Hindu Sangam.

"When a convert chooses to convert out of the religion, the decision should also be left to his right without any restrictions," he added.

Vigneswaran's statement comes following a two-day MIC brainstorming session held in

Penang which ended today.

Elaborating on the session, the Youth chief said numerous issues were discussed in depth, including those raised during the recent general election.

In a nutshell, Vigneswaran said the dismal performance of MIC members in the polls is a result of their failure to resolve sensitive issues pertaining to the Indian community.

"The issues involve religious rights, educational issues, government contracts, business opportunities and employment in the civil service," he added.

He also said the government appeared to be uncommitted in resolving issues affecting the community and this allowed certain groups to take advantage of the situation and influence the community to turn its back on MIC and the BN government.

"It seems that the efforts of the BN for the past 50 years are no longer something to be proud of," he added.

Silent no more

Vigneswaran said this allowed movements like Hindraf and Makkal Sakthi to flourish and they received support from the opposition which exploited the sentiment for political mileage.

hindraf british petition rally 251107 malaysian flags "In view of this, MIC Youth has decided not to keep silent any longer or blindly follow protocol when there is a need to voice out sensitive issues.

"This does not mean that we will ignore or not adhere to the existing directive as a BN component party," he added.

Among the strategies devised during the session, Vigneswaran said it includes the immediate setting up of a toll-free line for the community, especially the youngsters, to channel their grouses in a more effective manner.

MIC Youth will also form a 'task force' to receive complaints directly without delegating it to other quarters.

Another move will be the immediate creation of an electronic media team called 'E-Team' to counter the allegations raised by the opposition in cyberspace.

Vigneswaran also said that MIC Youth will look into education issues as well in an aggressive manner.