

Pak Lah, be first PM to abolish ISA
Malaysiakini.com
Sept 19, 2008
Athi Veerangan

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi should take the bold step to abolish the Internal Security Act and go down in history as the first Malaysian prime minister to remove the draconian security law.

DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng suggested Abdullah to make full use of his final months in office to do something "worthy" to Malaysians.

"Abdullah should abolish ISA and free all detainees in Kamunting (detention camp) before he leaves..." he said, referring to the increasing pressure within the ruling Umno party for Abdullah to step down.

"At least Malaysians would remember him as the first prime minister who was bold enough and had the political will to get rid of the draconian law," he told journalists at the state government headquarters in Komtar, Georgetown.

"So long the country is not free from ISA, Malaysia is not free. Abdullah should free the country from ISA and get his name imprinted in the record books," added Lim, who himself was detained for 18 months during the 1987 Operation Lallang crackdown.

Although DAP was relieved with the release of party parliamentarian Teresa Kok today, Lim nonetheless argued that she should not have been detained in first place.

He said detaining a person without trial was not only against the rule of law, but amounted to a state of "lawlessness".

Only 'racists' are safe from ISA

Teresa Kok, 43, journalist Tan Hoon Cheng, 33, and prominent blogger Raja Petra Kamarudin, 58, were detained under ISA in last Friday's crackdown.

While Tan was within 18 hours - the shortest ISA detention in history - Kok was released this afternoon after seven days under police custody.

The trio's detention has reignited public calls for the abolition of the tough security law.

The Penang chief minister said last Friday's crackdown showed that no Malaysians, except perhaps for "racists and extremists", were safe from jaws of ISA.

Lim is amazed that the police have yet to take action against suspended Bukit Bendera Umno division chief Ahmad Ismail and state Umno secretary Azhar Ibrahim despite numerous police reports lodged against them for allegedly committing sedition and criminal intimidation.

Ahmad triggered an uproar by uttering racially inflammatory remarks during last month's Permatang Pauh by-election that 'Chinese were immigrants squatting in the country'.

At a press conference on Sept 5, Azhar allegedly called for journalist Tan to be "killed" if she causes another May 13 racial riot following her controversial report on Ahmad's remark in Chinese newspaper Sin Chew Daily.

ISA campaign to continue

Despite Kok's freedom, DAP will proceed with its campaign to free all ISA detainees, including Raja Petra, and the five Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) leaders - P Uthayakumar, 47, T Vasanthakumar, 35, M Manoharan, 47, R Kenghadharan, 41, and V Ganabatirau, 35.

The five were detained on Dec 13 in a police crackdown on Hindraf leaders following a mammoth rally led by the human rights group in Kuala Lumpur on Nov 25.

Manoharan, who is a trained lawyer, is also DAP state assemblyperson for Kota Alam Shah in Selangor.

Meanwhile, Hindu Action Network coordinator G Mugunthan welcomed Kok's release and questioned the police's motive for her seven-day detention.

"The police owed us an explanation. It cannot go on avoiding public accountability on the ISA arrests," he said.

Mugunthan called on Abdullah to release all Kamunting detainees, estimated at nearly 80, as a compassionate gesture during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

He also hoped the government would not use the ISA to silence its political opponents, especially Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/90077>