

**Forum 'reminds' PM of his remarks against ISA**  
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**Fauwaz Abdul Aziz**

Several speakers at a forum last night 'reminded' Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi of his as well as his government's statements against the Internal Security Act and other laws that impinge on the right to fair trial.

Speaking at a forum entitled 'Abolish the ISA' organised by DAP at the Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall in Kuala Lumpur, Bar Council president Ambiga Sreenevasan kicked off the calls for Abdullah to 'introspect' by recounting his statements in 2006.

In response to reports of two Malaysians who had been placed in the US' Guantanamo Bay prison for suspected involvement in terrorist activities, Ambiga noted that Abdullah had called for the two Malaysians be given a fair trial.

"It is important that they get a fair trial," she quoted the prime minister as saying then.

Also in 2006 when Malaysia was seeking to become a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, Ambiga said the government had 'waxed lyrical' about its commitments to human rights and fundamental freedoms, including in the promotion of a free media.

**'Give them a fair trial'**

"Malaysia, since attaining independence in 1957, upholds the promotion and protection of all human rights as an indispensable aspect in the process of nation-building," she said, reading from the government's prepared document to the UN.

"Consistent with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, successive Malaysian governments have made the guarantee of the individual's fundamental rights and liberties, as enshrined in the constitution, the cornerstone of their policies and programmes, while noting that all individuals have duties and responsibilities to the community to ensure the continued enjoyment of peace, stability and prosperity.

"Another manifestation of the importance that the government attaches to the enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms is the promotion of a free media, including in cyberspace, as well as the encouragement of vibrant and active civil societies," she read further.

Relating these statements to the reality of the government's arrests recently of three persons under the ISA - which provides for detention without trial - Ambiga said there is nothing disagreeable to what Abdullah and his government had said on paper.

"Do we agree to these (statements)? Of course we agree to it. This is precisely what we are saying," she said.

In reference to the scores of people currently detained under the ISA, she asked: "Why are they there? What we are saying is: Give them a fair trial!"

Seputeh MP Teresa Kok, Sin Chew Daily reporter Tan Hoon Cheng and popular blogger Raja

Petra Kamarudin were arrested on Sept 12 for various alleged offences under the ISA.

While Kok and Tan were subsequently released, Raja Petra was ordered to undergo a two-year detention.

Their arrests led to an outcry from opposition political parties and non-governmental organisations as well as within the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition. Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Zaid Ibrahim had resigned over the ISA arrests.

### **'He slammed Dr M over ISA'**

dap abolish isa forum 230908 a sivanesanPerak state exco and DAP state assemblyperson for Sungkai A Sivanesan, similarly, recounted Abdullah's statements in 1987 during the time of Umno's internal tussle between then prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad and former finance minister Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah.

Sivanesan said Abdullah had gone on record to say: "If we want to save Malaysia and Umno, Dr Mahathir must be removed. He uses draconian laws such as the ISA to silence his critics."

He also quoted Abdullah as having said that 'laws such as the ISA have no place in modern Malaysia. It is a draconian and barbaric law.'

"I wonder if Malaysia is still modern to Abdullah today?" asked Sivanesan.

Other speakers at the forum were Raja Petra's wife Marina Abdullah, ISA-detained Hindu Rights Action Force leader V Ganabatirau's wife B Buvaneswary, PAS Shah Alam MP Khalid Samad, Abolish ISA Movement (GMI) chairperson Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh, Penang Deputy Chief Minister P Ramasamy, PKR Lembah Pantai MP Nurul Izzah Anwar, DAP leader Kok, and Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng.

In another development, Sivanesan also announced that the Perak government has decided that all of its departments and agencies would no longer be purchasing Malay daily Utusan Malaysia due to the its slanted reports of Pakatan Rakyat leaders.