

The PSM-6: Najib's Nightmare
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The candlelight vigil for the PSM-6 at Bukit Aman police headquarters will enter its third week today and is held to demand the unconditional and immediate release of 6 members of Parti Sosialis Malaysia.

The PSM-6 have been detained without charges being made, since their arrest on 2 July. They are held under the Emergency Ordinance Act 1969 (EO).

The public show of support for the PSM-6 (or EO-6) has been unwavering across the nation. Several doctors have petitioned for their release and police reports have been made against the Home minister, Hishamuddin Hussein, the IGP, Ismail Omar and his deputy, Khalid Abu Bakar, to protest about the unlawful detentions.

Despite national pressure and international condemnation, the PSM-6 are still being detained amid allegations of torture and forced confessions.

The US-based Human Rights Watch had earlier warned that the EO should be repealed. They say that the EO was a temporary measure, as a result of the May 13 riots, which has over four decades, been used to detain criminal suspects without trial for an indefinite period, because the police cannot find sufficient evidence to implicate them.

Ironically, whilst on an official visit to the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said that street demonstrations had the potential to cause damage to people and property.

He said: "We don't need all these (demonstrations). What we want is a Malaysia that's transformed, a Malaysia that'll be our pride and joy.

"If we're to err, let's err on the side of ensuring public order, safety and harmony, because once something goes wrong, it'll cascade very rapidly, and there's no telling what will happen because violence begets violence."

Nevertheless, Malaysia's reputation as a harmonious, democratic nation suffered a serious blow when Najib's police responded violently to Bersih's peaceful march in which one protestor, Baharuddin Ahmad, died.

Western governments and the United Nations were highly critical of Najib's handling of Bersih's 'Walk for Democracy'.

Najib's response to CNN's questions about the police brutality was incredible: "It was quite mild because although they were taken in, they were released after eight hours and they were treated really well. There was no undue use of force and the demonstrators were dispersed using minimum force."

Rupert Colville, the spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights told AFP: "We are very concerned by the recent crackdown on peaceful demonstrators by the government in Malaysia.

"We are alarmed at the targeting of individuals for championing the rights of Malaysian citizens to express their opinions and to peacefully assemble."

Either Najib is not aware that his police are using brute force on a peaceful group or else, he does not mean what he says.

Najib's lip service to important topics is legendary. When he gave his speech at the 65th United Nations Assembly last year, he said that extremism had no place in society and yet he failed to punish Muslim/Malay extremists at home.

Najib may have met the Pope in an effort to bridge relations between Christians and Muslims in Malaysia, but on his return, his mistrust of the Christians showed in a speech he made in Sepang when he hinted that he would respect Christians, only if they respected him.

If Najib thought that a jolly in UK and the Vatican City would lend credence to his reputation, he is wrong.

By cutting short his vacation, he appeared desperate. The deportation of the Scorpene lawyer, the Frenchman Willam Bourdon, has given Najib more bad publicity.

Perhaps Najib's worst dilemma is the continued unlawful detention of the PSM-6.

The six are Sungei Siput MP Dr D Jeyakumar, PSM deputy chairperson M Sarasvathy, central committee members Choo Chon Kai and M Sukumaran, Sungai Siput branch secretary A Letchumanan and Youth leader Sarat Babu.

The police say that the PSM-6 were suspected to be the "movers" of Bersih and that they were detained to maintain public order.

Meanwhile, Law Minister, Nazri Aziz contends that the PSM-6 were communist insurgents who were going to topple the King.

These conflicting views mirror Najib's two faced character.

Haris Ibrahim who is part of the Bersih 2.0 steering committee denied the police allegation about the PSM-6 being part of the Bersih committee.

For those who are unaware, Dr. Jeyakumar is a highly respected individual and is considered a hero from Sarawak to Seberang Prai, where his work as a doctor has brought him into contact with the poor in both rural and urban communities, as well as workers whose rights were continually abused.

Friends in the Sungei Siput area say that Jeyakumar has worked tirelessly in many social causes, be it in the estates or to fight for workers's rights. He has helped Orang Asli communities and singlehandedly organised the construction of the "Titi Gantong People's Solidarity Suspension Bridge", without any government funding.

In comparison, some Sungei Siput folk allege that during Samy Vellu's reign, the ex-MIC leader did not address the deplorable living conditions of the Indians and when it came to election time, would proudly boast that poverty did not exist in Sungei Siput in an effort to impress the people. It was also alleged that anyone who dared contradict him would receive a visit from his thugs.

Today, Jeyakumar who has dedicated his life to helping the deprived and the socially excluded of society is treated like a criminal. He has chosen to go on a hunger strike until

the PSM-6 are either charged or released.

The recipient of the Malaysian Medical Association's Award for Community Service in 1999 is not a traitor. Like the other detainees, he has sought to overturn injustices and social imbalance in Malaysia.

Najib has been warned. Any harm or deterioration in health by any of the PSM-6 can only spell disaster for Najib.

But for tonight, 29 July, the PSM-6 will be remembered in a solemn vigil in London by people who care.

In the United Kingdom, the Abolish ISA Movement-UK chapter has organised a series of candle light vigils outside the Malaysian Tourism Office in Trafalgar Square, London from 2030 hrs. These watches will be held until the PSM-6 are released.

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