

**Charging Mat Sabu Is One Step Forward, Two Steps Back For Najib's Humbug Political Reforms**  
**MalaysianMirror.com**  
**September 22,2011**

Once again, the Barisan Nasional Government has returned to its old trick of employing the courts to intimidate, oppress and imprison their political opponents, as seen in the case of PAS Deputy President Mohamad Sabu (Mat Sabu) who was charged with criminal defamation for allegedly having slandered police officers killed during the colonial-era communist insurgency this morning.

If convicted, Mat Sabu faces up to two years in prison and a fine. Should that occur, he could be barred from contesting and campaigning in the next General Election. How convenient for Barisan Nasional. Is this BN's tactic to avoid having to face Mat Sabu in the next general election since his trial is scheduled for December 2011?

It was only last Thursday when Prime Minister Najib Razak announced his supposed political reforms with platitudes like "no individual will be arrested merely on the point of political ideology" and "a more open Malaysia with a dynamic democracy."

Barely a week has passed and he's already charged Mat Sabu over his opinion of historical events. So much for recognising freedom of expression. A truly open and dynamic Prime Minister would acknowledge that differences of opinion over the interpretation of history should not be argued in a court of law but resolved through dialogue and debate in an academic setting.

Furthermore, Mat Sabu did not defame anyone, nor did he raise any racial or religious issue unlike the incendiary, racist and hate-driven statements and outright lies which have been repeatedly spewed by the likes of Utusan Malaysia and Perkasa.

The Government has never taken any action against Utusan Malaysia and Perkasa, allowing them to continue to sow the seeds of fear and hatred with impunity. It is clear that the Government is practicing selective prosecution by taking Mat Sabu to court.

I also condemn the Molotov cocktail attack upon Mat Sabu's home yesterday which follows an acid attack threat he received via SMS previously. These threats upon him and his family are criminal and deserve to be charged in court. I repeat my call to Polis DiRaja Malaysia to investigate this case, bring the criminals to justice and provide the necessary protection for him and his family.

I urge Barisan Nasional leaders to issue public statements to condemn outright the threats upon Mat Sabu as a show of their stand against the use of violence.

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