

**IGP's Order To Arrest Gamblers In Cybercafes With Immediate Effect Welcomed**  
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**By Lau Weng San**

Inspector-General of Police (IGP) Ismail Omar's order to all police officers nationwide to arrest gamblers in cybercafes with immediate effect is most welcomed and it shows the vast power police has in curbing illegal gambling.

Selangor State Government under Pakatan Rakyat (PR) has been under severe attack by UMNO politicians and its organ Utusan Malaysia since 2008 that illegal gambling and other sin activities are on the increasing trend since PR took over the state government three years ago.

Some of them even went ahead to criticise the state government that we are tolerating such illegal and immoral activities when local councils failed to take actions to curb these illegal activities.

Selangor State Government has been clarifying on the matter since 2008, that cooperations from other government agencies, especially agencies under the jurisdiction of Federal Government are very much needed to completely root out these illegal activities. These agencies none the less include the Royal Malaysian Police, Immigration Department, Tenaga Nasional Berhad, Syabas etc.

Without the cooperations of these agencies, local councils' enforcement teams are only confined to act within their legal jurisdiction whereby offenders are normally fined with very minimal penalties. Unfortunately, repeat-offenders also can choose to ignore such penalties as the power of the local council are only limited to the scope of business licenses.

Nevertheless, local authorities in Selangor have never back tracked from their responsibilities to keep Selangor clean from vice. For example, Petaling Jaya City Council or Majlis Bandaraya Petaling Jaya (MBPJ) in a written reply to Petaling Jaya Selatan MP, Hee Loy Sian, which is also copied to all elected representatives in Petaling Jaya, states that the council has conducted a total of 238 raids were conducted on illegal cybercafes, 68 raids on entertainment outlets, 39 raids on snooker centres, 83 raids on budget hotels and 124 raids on SPA centres for the first half of 2011.

With the IGP's announcement that police officers can also arrest gamblers caught on the spot, I believe it will help to reduce such activities in Selangor, which has been selectively targeted by UMNO politicians to portray a negative image that PR is tolerating such activities. The announcement also shows the vast power that the police has in this aspect. Already given the power to confiscate slot machines, arresting the culprits and even terminating electricity supply with the presence of TNB officers, now the police can even arrest the gamblers themselves.

It is now clear that the problem is not on the shoulder the local councils alone, but more on the inter-departmental cooperations to put up an effective measure to curb illegal gambling and other immoral activities in Selangor.

I hope the police will continue to work with local councils and the relevant authorities in PR state government without any political preferences as they serve not their political masters but the people!

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