

Najib Has Smashed To Smithereens The Mirage Of Political Transformation With Peaceful Assembly Bill

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The Prime Minister, Najib Razak has now smashed to smithereens the mirage of political transformation and “best democracy in the world” with the first reading of the undemocratic Peaceful Assembly Bill 2011.

The mirage created by Najib that he wants to make Malaysia “the best democracy in the world” lasted only two months as the proposed repeal of Section 27 of the Police Act requiring police permits for any gathering of three or more persons is to be replaced by a more undemocratic and repressive Peaceful Assembly Bill violating the constitutional right of Malaysians to freedom of assembly.

In many respects, the Peaceful Assembly Bill is even more restrictive and repressive than Section 27 of the Police Act. Under the new law, for instance, a person can be fined up to RM20,000 as compared to RM10,000 under the Police Act.

In banning “street protests”, restricting assemblies from “prohibited places” or “within fifty metres from the limit of the prohibited place”, requiring notice of 30 days for an assembly to be held as well as empowering the police which is a total stranger to the concept of “democratic policing” to impose arbitrary restrictions and conditions for an assembly, the fundamental constitutional right of freedom to assembly runs the risk of being grounded to ashes.

The Prime Minister should withdraw the Peaceful Assembly Bill in its present form to remove the undemocratic features to ensure that the new law does not end up as a more undemocratic and repressive substitute for Section 27 of the Police Act.

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