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Dr M lauds move to abolish ISA

KUALA LUMPUR: The move to repeal the Internal Security Act (ISA) will give greater freedom to Malaysians, said former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Expressing his support for the Act's abolition, he however said that the ISA which was introduced during the British-era, was actually not too cruel because Malaysians were still free to give their views and opinions.

"Not all of those who opened their mouths were immediately detained under the ISA. And the perception that there was no freedom in Malaysia was also not correct," he said at the Hari Raya open house organised by *KelabChedet.com* here last night.

Dr Mahathir said the move to abolish the ISA would place Malaysia "on the moral high ground", which could in fact be even considered as one level better than developed nations

like the United States and Britain.

"After the abolition of the Act, we can start the campaign to seek the freedom of those detained without trial. For example, those currently detained at the Guantanamo Bay detention centre.

"Previously, they criticised Malaysia for purportedly being cruel by detaining people without trial. But they are the ones doing it now.

"They have probably just realised that in certain situations, Malaysia had to detain people without trial. But what they are doing in Guantanamo Bay is even more cruel by passing laws allowing the torture of detainees," he said.

However, Dr Mahathir feared that extremists and racists in Malaysia might take the opportunity of the Act's abolition to issue statements which could be detrimental to the country. - Bernama