

'ABOLISHING, AMENDING LAWS NEED CAREFUL STUDY'

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This is to ensure balance in looking after the country and people's rights, says PM

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the laws, relevant agencies were given the authority to conduct investigations, like in the case of Sosma, where police could take action against perpetrators based on evidence gathered.

THE amendment or abolishment of any law has to be studied in great detail

first as its original principles were based on protecting the people's rights, interests and safety.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government was tightening up several acts, which would either be abolished or amended.

This, he said, was to ensure that there was balance in looking after the country's interests and security, as well as human rights and the principles of justice demanded by the people.

"As a government which upholds the rule of law, the amendment or abolishment of an act must be made with careful deliberation.

"This is because the basic principles of laws are to protect the people's rights, interests and safety," he told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

He said the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012, (Sosma) for example, was enacted to eradicate subversive actions that could threaten public order.

"However, we found that there was room for abuse, which caused unease among the people. As a responsible government, we must take that into consideration," he said in response to a question by Datuk Seri Dr Edmund Santhara (PKR-Segamat).

Dr Santhara had asked Dr Mahathir on the status of the abolishment of draconian acts.

Dr Mahathir said in enforcing

"The government is of the view that some of the laws are incomplete as they did not have a clear distinction between minor and serious offences.

"For example, while some offenders clearly committed acts of terror by placing bombs on their bodies, there was also weak evidence where some individuals

were pictured in the company of people who were later determined to be terrorists.

"There are people who unknowingly contributed to terror groups.

"Donations of RM200 or RM300 will not topple a government. This is the police's job to distinguish such evidence.

"This is why the government is reviewing relevant laws to differentiate minor crimes from serious ones that could jeopardise the nation's security."

Dr Mahathir reiterated the government's stand on its intention to review several laws besides Sosma, including the Sedition Act, Crime Prevention Act, Printing Presses and Publications Act, as well as the National Security Council, in line with its election manifesto.

He said those with evidence of donations made by the previous government to victims of the Sri Lankan conflict, in which Tamil militant organisation Liberation

Tigers of Tamil Eelam was involved, should lodge a report on the matter.

He said this was to enable the authorities to investigate claims that the previous government had contributed US\$1 million to Sri Lankan Tamils in 2012 for relief as a result of their displacement.

Reports claimed that the money, channelled through MIC, was given to the Malaysian Tamil Forum and meant to assist Tamils in Sri Lanka affected by the war.

"We don't have clear evidence (on such a claim). If you have it, we ask that you lodge a report so that action can be taken," he said in response to a supplementary question by Kesavan Subramaniam (PKR-Sungai Siput).

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