

Najib misled over assembly law, says Kit Siang
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 28 — DAP's Lim Kit Siang refuted today Datuk Seri Najib Razak's explanation over a proposed assembly law, saying the prime minister was poorly-advised and spreading the wrong misinformation to the public as a result.

The veteran opposition MP said Najib should not blame Pakatan Rakyat (PR) for the criticised contents of the Peaceful Assembly Bill (PAB), but his Cabinet, the Attorney-General and his legal officers, as well as the parliamentary draftsmen whom Lim described as "proven to be sleeping on their jobs".

"I do not believe that Najib has deliberately told a lie about the PAB, but clearly he had been told a lie by his advisers causing him to spread a lie," Lim said in a statement this evening.

He said the prime minister did not fully understand the contents of the proposed law, which is to replace the restrictive Section 27 of the Police Act that unconstitutionally criminalises unpermitted gatherings of three or more people, or the justified comparisons to Myanmar's new law allowing street demonstrations.

Lim pointed out that in claiming public assemblies only needed a five or 10-day advanced notice instead of 30 as stated previously, Najib had tripped up other aspects of the proposed law, namely that the law would not require organisers to inform the police if the assemblies were held in designated spots.

The Ipoh-Timor MP added that if Article 10 of the Federal Constitution – which guarantees freedom of assembly – was to have real meaning, the government should allow all assembly in all public areas, and not select certain spots.

He said the government should instead declare specific areas that were out of bounds for security reasons.

"Najib has only provided more grounds why there should be no indecent haste to force through the passage of PAB in Dewan Rakyat tomorrow," the DAP advisor said.

"It should be referred to a parliamentary select committee for full, meaningful and mature consultation, consideration and consensus," he added, echoing the views shared by the Malaysian Bar and the country's national human rights commission.

Najib was forced to defend his proposed law after the government came under fire for saying it would amend seven provisions in the Bill, but not revealing more other than saying the 30-day advanced notice will be shortened to 10 days.

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