

Ibrahim Ali cautious over ISA repeal, says racist groups still exist
The Malaysian Insider
September 16, 2011
By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 16 — Datuk Ibrahim Ali has cautioned against early celebrations over Putrajaya's decision last night to repeal the Internal Security Act (ISA), telling the government that racism still exists in the country.

The fiery founder and president of Malay rights group Perkasa, who supported suggestions to use the ISA against Bersih 2.0 protestors, said he would adopt a "wait-and-see" approach to Datuk Seri Najib Razak's reform promises before declaring a formal stand.

"To Perkasa, do not let it end like the saying 'jangan keris makan tuan' (do not fall on your own sword).

"Many issues should be considered because Malaysia is a multi-racial country where there are groups that are still bent on having racist attitudes and do not respect the basis of the Federal Constitution with their many demands, as we have seen recently," he said in a statement last night.

Ibrahim (picture), who has been detained twice without trial under the ISA, also appeared to doubt the government's sincerity in its latest reforms, questioning if the Najib's announcement was merely a populist move.

"Was the decision made for the government to gain popularity or are they truly prioritising national security?

"As such, Perkasa chooses to wait and see," he said.

Najib announced a slew of reforms during his Malaysia Day address to the nation last night, including repealing the ISA, amendments to other security and press laws and the lifting of three Emergency Declarations.

Ibrahim, however, lauded the decision to lift the Emergency Declarations, saying they were no longer relevant.

"Perkasa congratulates the PM in conjunction with Malaysia Day celebration and the 54th Merdeka Day," he said.

Najib also said that two new preventive laws would be enacted in place of the ISA, which de facto law minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz later told The Malaysian Insider would still allow for detention without trial.

But the laws, said to be fashioned after anti-terrorism legislation like the Patriot Act in the US, are to be solely used against terrorists and not to curb individuals from supporting different political ideologies.

The Malaysian Insider understands that Najib's speech last night is the start of an election push which will definitely not be held this year although there was speculation of snap polls in November.

Najib came to power in April 2009 with the promise of reviewing the ISA but has now done away with the security law completely in what appears to be a drastic move to win back middle Malaysia.

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this week Najib should push back the election timetable and the influential former prime minister's views have found support among the Cabinet and senior government leaders who want the Barisan Nasional (BN) government to regain greater support.

The latest survey from local pollster Merdeka Center showed that Najib's popularity slid to 59 per cent this August from the highest of 79 per cent in May 2010, fuelled by rising concerns over the surge in living costs and his government's handling of the July 9 Bersih 2.0 rally.

The Bersih 2.0 rally and spike in living costs this year are similar to events in 2007 that eventually led to BN's loss of its customary two-thirds parliamentary majority and four states in Election 2008 to three opposition parties that later organised themselves into a pact called Pakatan Rakyat (PR).

That led to Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi losing his job in 2009 in favour of Najib who became the country's sixth prime minister after more than 30 years in government. Najib's father, Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, was the country's second prime minister.

The Malaysian Insider

Copyright © 2011 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/ibrahim-ali-cautious-over-isa-repeal-says-racist-groups-still-exist/>