

In non-acquittal, PSM sees sword over heads

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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 19 — Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) lashed out today at the authorities' failure to acquit 30 of its members of "unfounded allegations", saying the move allowed Putrajaya to keep the charges hanging over the heads of the activists.

In a statement today, PSM secretary-general S. Arutchelvan expressed concern that without a clear acquittal, the government could bring the same charges to bear against the group in the future.

"Will the saga and charade end here? PSM will fight on and continue to seek justice on what has happened," said Arutchelvan.

He added that the prime minister, home minister and the Inspector-General of Police should clarify the decision to not acquit the 30 and apologise to the activists for their arrests on June 25.

He said the party would also seek a meeting with Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein to over the "gross violations" purportedly committed on the group, especially the six who were detained under the Emergency Ordinance (EO).

"The authorities must be held responsible for all the unfounded allegations, slander and unlawful arrests and detention," he wrote.

The 30 PSM activists, who were arrested in Penang on suspicion of attempting to wage a war against the King, were granted a discharge not amounting to an acquittal earlier today for charges under two laws — the Societies Act and Internal Security Act (ISA).

They were detained during the party's "Udahlah Bersara" campaign and their arrests were later said to be linked to the government's pre-Bersih rally clampdown.

The group was accused of attempting to revive communism and wage war against the King when T-shirts with the images of Marxist revolutionary leader Che Guevara and Malayan communist figures were found in their possession.

Six key activists, including Sungai Siput MP Dr Michael Jeyakumar, were later imprisoned for 28 days under the EO, which allows for detention without trial for up to 60 days.

The other five detained were PSM deputy chairman M. Sarasvathy, central committee members Choo Chon Kai and M. Sugumaran, Sungai Siput branch secretary A. Letchumanan and Youth chief R. Saratbabu.

Today, Arutchelvan also demanded an explanation as to why two buses with PSM members were stopped on suspicion they were carrying weapons on the day of the arrests, as well as the arrests of two foreigners in connection with the Bersih 2.0 rally during that same period.

"Who is responsible for that and will they be charged? What about the news that PSM supporters plan to bomb the police station in Sungai Siput? Who made these allegations and

will they be charged? What about the many more slander and slur thrown at us some mainstream media?" he said.

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