

**Anwar cautious of PM's reforms, questions new security laws**  
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**By Shazwan Mustafa Kamal**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 16 — Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has remained cautious of the Najib administration's latest move in repealing the Internal Security Act 1960 (ISA), and has questioned the proposed new security laws as replacements.

In a response to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's announcement made last night, the opposition leader said the public should remain "cautious" whether the repealing of the ISA guaranteed "freedom" from other forms of persecution.

Anwar questioned the proposed new security laws as replacements. — File pic  
"ISA: sambut baik pemansuhannya setelah sekian lama diperjuang rakyat dan ditentang umno. Wbp harus waspada samada kebebasan dijamin dan Akta ganti (ISA: welcome the abolishment after long fought for by the rakyat and opposed by Umno. But we have to be wary whether freedom is now guaranteed and what will be the replacement Acts)," said Anwar on micro-blogging site Twitter.

Najib announced he wants to repeal the ISA and the three Emergency Declarations when both the Dewan Negara and Dewan Rakyat have their next sitting.

The prime minister said new laws will be enacted to protect the peace, harmony and security of the country.

He also announced that the government will do away with annual printing and publishing permits with permits that can be cancelled if regulations are flouted.

Najib acknowledged in his address to the nation on the eve of Malaysia Day that the move to increase civil liberties was "risky, but we are doing this for our survival."

PKR vice-president N. Surendran said reform announcements were "vague and limited" and that the PM had failed to acknowledge any wrongdoing in the usage of the ISA as well as emergency laws for "five long decades."

Surendran charged that the reforms still left "substantial" undemocratic and oppressive powers in the hands of the government.

"The ISA is to be abolished; however two new laws are to be enacted providing for preventive detention. The ambit and wording of these two new laws are unknown," he said in a statement last night.

Najib also said last night that two new security laws would be introduced for preventive detention which would be limited only to cases of terrorism and "ensure that basic human rights are protected."

Surendran said the government still retained 'massive and dangerous' arbitrary powers. The PM said that under the new laws, detentions could only be extended by the court and therefore "the power of detention will be shifted from the executive to the judiciary, unless it concerns terrorism."

"Further, these two laws are to be enacted under Article 149 of the Federal Constitution which provides for preventive laws to be enacted where 'action has been taken or threatened by any substantial body of persons' inside or outside the Federation.

"Where is there such a threat against the country at this time? What business has the PM to enact two more preventive laws when there is no such threat existing?" Surendran said in response.

The PKR leader demanded details of the amendment of the Police Act- to allow for freedom of assembly according to international norms, although street protests would still be outlawed.

"He (Najib) gives no details at all of the drift and purport of the amendments. Indeed he accompanies this promise of reform with menaces against 'street demonstrations'. He should have declared the abolition of the requirement of a permit for such assemblies," said Surendran.

Despite the announcements, he said the government still retained "massive and dangerous" arbitrary powers, and questioned why Putrajaya had yet to announce any reforms of the police or even the setting up of an Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC).

"(There is) no reduction of the almost absolute powers of the Attorney-General under Article 145 of the Federal Constitution. No promise of a really transparent and independent judicial appointments mechanism," he added.

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