

**Peaceful Assembly Bill 2011 Tabled In Parliament  
Bernama  
November 22, 2011**

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 22 (Bernama) -- The Peaceful Assembly Bill 2011 to allow citizens to organise and participate in assemblies peaceably and without arms was tabled for first reading in Parliament here today.

The Bill, tabled by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz, is one of the efforts initiated by the government to undertake the transformation of the existing legal framework, in relation to the constitutional rights of citizens to assemble.

It seeks to allow citizens to organise and participate in assemblies peaceably and without arms, subject to restrictions deemed necessary and in the interest of public order and security.

Clause 4 of the Bill makes it clear that the right to organise or participate in an assembly peaceably and without arms does not extend to non-citizen, an assembly held at any prohibited place and within 50 metres from the limit of the prohibited place. It is also not extended to a street protest.

The clause also provides that a person below age 21, cannot be an organiser while a child below the age of 15, cannot participate in an assembly.

Any person who recruits or brings a child to an assembly or allows a child to an assembly is also deemed to commit an offence, and upon conviction can be fined up to RM20,000.

The Bill also stipulates that the organiser of an assembly must ensure the assembly is in compliance with the laws and does not commit any act or make any statement that could promote ill-feeling, discontent or hostility amongst the public nor disturb the public tranquility, while a participant should adhere to the orders given by the police or organiser to conduct the assembly orderly.

Clause 8 of the Bill also sets out the responsibilities of the police, where a police officer may take measures deemed necessary to ensure orderly conduct of the assembly, in accordance with the Act or any other written law.

Under Clause 14, an officer in charge of a police district is required to respond to a notification of assembly within 12 days, upon receipt of the notification, which he also needs to respond to organisers, any restriction and condition to be imposed.

Clause 15 sets out the conditions and restrictions that may be imposed by the officer in charge of the police district such as date, time and duration, and place of assembly, manner of the assembly and conduct of participants during the assembly.

The Bill, when passed, will empower a police officer to arrest, without warrant, any organiser or participant who refuses or fails to comply with any restriction and condition imposed.

Clause 21 also empowers a police officer to issue an order to disperse, if the assembly did not comply with the laws stated above.

"The police officer, in exercising the power to disperse an assembly under this clause, is empowered to use all reasonable force. All persons who fail to comply with an order of the police officer commits an offence," the Bill said.

Clause 23 will allow a police officer to make any form of recording of an assembly while Clause 24 allows any media representative to have reasonable access to a place of assembly and use any equipment to report on the assembly.

The Bill will be known as Peaceful Assembly Act 2011 when passed.

Meanwhile, in consequence to the Peaceful Assembly Bill 2011, the Police Act 1967 (Act 344) will also be amended.

The Bill will seek to delete sections 27, 27A, 27B and 27C of the Act 344, which does away with the requirement for a licence to convene or collect assembly or meeting or to form a procession in any public place.

Following the deletion, all matters relating to a licence for convening or collecting any assembly or forming any procession under section 27, pending before the officer in charge of a police district or commissioner or chief police officer shall not be proceeded with.

All licence issues for any assembly and procession to be convened, collected or formed before the date of coming into operation of this Act, shall cease to have effect.

Section 21 of the Police Act 1967 (Act 344), which is referred to, as the "principal Act" in this Act, will be amended by deleting the words, "any processions".

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