

**ISA replacements still being drafted, says Hisham**  
**The Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Shannon Teoh**

KUALA LUMPUR, March 12 — Laws to replace the controversial Internal Security Act (ISA) are still being drafted despite the government promising to repeal the law that provides for detention without trial this month, Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said today.

But the home minister assured reporters the repeal will take place despite the two new laws “still being drafted by the Attorney-General.”

The home minister said the new laws will see key changes in terms of length of detention, treatment of detainees, contact with family members and an appeal process. — file pic  
“I have not seen the final draft. It will be brought to Cabinet first before being tabled,” the Umno vice president said.

He said the new laws will see key changes in terms of length of detention, treatment of detainees, contact with family members and an appeal process.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Abdul Halim Mu’adzam Shah said today Datuk Seri Najib Razak’s promise of reforms such as the repeal of the ISA are “major steps” towards strengthening civil liberties and safeguarding the public’s fundamental rights and freedom.

The prime minister announced the repeal in a raft of reforms in his Malaysia Day address last September but later said it would only be done in this parliamentary sitting after two new replacement laws are drafted.

However, police have continued to use the ISA, which allows for detention without trial, most notably in a sweep of 13 suspected Islamic militants in Sabah last November.

Just days after Najib’s announcement, resistance began to surface, with political hardliners like Perkasa’s Datuk Ibrahim Ali calling on the prime minister to preserve the spirit of the ISA in the two new laws.

Opposition lawmakers and civil society groups such as the Bar Council have remained sceptical of the reform, expressing fears that the enactment of the two new laws means the ISA is merely being repackaged.

Hishammuddin also insisted in November the ISA substitutes will continue to provide for preventive detention as practised in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia to fight terrorism.

But Najib said last month the replacement laws will demand a higher burden of proof before any arrests can be made as “we cannot be in the state of mind of just arresting anyone but must ask if the evidence can stand in the court of law.”

The prime minister kicked off his reform package in October after tabling the repeal of the

Restricted Residence Act and the Banishment Act.

These reforms appear to be key concessions by Najib to win back middle Malaysia before polls expected this year.

His administration came under heavy fire for its clampdown on the July 9, 2011 Bersih rally for free and fair elections.

Police fired tear gas and water cannon to disperse tens of thousands of demonstrators in chaotic scenes which resulted in nearly 1,700 arrested, scores injured and the death of an ex-soldier.

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