

Najib: ISA repeal will not affect current detainees
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 16 — The repeal of the Internal Security Act and introduction of the Security Offences (Special Measures) Bill “will not affect” those currently detained under the law, Datuk Seri Najib Razak told the Dewan Rakyat today.

“Let it be known that even though this Bill repeals the ISA 1960, the Bill will not affect the detention of persons currently under detention, unless their detention orders are revoked by the Home Minister,” he said when tabling the new Bill for second reading this morning.

The new security law seeks to replace the highly-criticised ISA and is a part of the government's slew of reforms aimed at increasing civil liberties.

Among others, the Bill removes the government's right to detain a person without trial and reduces the maximum detention period from two years to 28 days.

Opposition lawmakers and civil society groups have long rallied for the ISA to be repealed, claiming that it infringes on basic human rights and denies a person the right to fair trial.

When addressing the House today, Najib (picture) noted that decades have passed since the threat of the Communist insurgency, which was the reason behind the ISA's enactment in 1960.

He said that communism is no longer the basis of any country's rule but added that despite this, global peace has not been achieved.

“Instead, we are seeing the threat of communism replaced with international violence based on extremist ideologies.

“As such, the country not only needs political maturity from the people but also a weapon of defence in the form of the Security Offences (Special Measures) Bill 2012,” he said.

At a press conference in Parliament later, an anti-ISA lobby group said it was insufficient for the government to repeal the ISA and replace it with another security law.

Abolish ISA Movement (GMI) chairman Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh also railed against the government's apparent refusal to release those currently detained under the ISA.

He demanded that the government free the detainees or haul them to court to give them a fair hearing.

“The ISA detention camp must be shut down.

“All ISA victims must be paid fair compensation for the suffering they and their families were put through,” he said.

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