

Add Sedition Act repeal to reforms, Kit Siang tells Najib
The Malaysian Insider
January 20 , 2012
By Clara Chooi

PUTRAJAYA, Jan 20 — DAP veteran Lim Kit Siang today urged Datuk Seri Najib Razak to repeal the Sedition Act, expressing rage that the 1948 British-enacted law is still being used to limit opposition dissent.

The Ipoh Timor MP, who was present this morning for lawyer Karpal Singh's sedition case in the Court of Appeal, also lambasted the Attorney-General's Chambers for using the law against the DAP chairman in 2009, saying today's appeal should have never been initiated.

"This case should have never been instituted by the A-G. The appeal, as well, shouldn't have been initiated.

"The prime minister has said there will be reforms of all draconian laws so I call on him to initiate a repeal of the Sedition Act," Lim (picture) told reporters at the Palace of Justice here.

He suggested that Najib propose the repeal during the March sitting of Parliament, ahead of a general election widely expected to be held soon.

When promising to increase civil liberties, Najib had announced last year a proposal to repeal the Internal Security Act, yet another law that Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lawmakers have described as draconian.

Earlier today, Karpal was ordered to enter his defence on his sedition charge over remarks involving the Perak Sultan in 2009 after the Court of Appeal ruled that the prosecution had proved a prima facie case.

Karpal had been indicted under section 4(1) of the Sedition Act 1948 for allegedly uttering seditious words against the Perak Sultan at his legal firm in Jalan Pudu Lama, Kuala Lumpur on February 6, 2009 during the Perak constitutional crisis.

He is alleged to have said that the removal of Datuk Seri Mohamad Nizar Jamaluddin as Perak menteri besar and the appointment of Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir by the Sultan could be questioned in a court of law.

Karpal was acquitted by High Court judge Azman Abdullah. The A-G's Chambers subsequently filed an appeal last year, contending that the judge had taken a wrong approach when he ruled the prosecution had failed to prove prima facie.

"We are appalled by the judgment of the Court of Appeal. Clearly, Malaysia still has a very long way to go towards achieving true rule of law and respect for democracy," Lim said of today's decision.

Karpal has announced his intention to appeal today's court decision despite acknowledging that his attempt may be rejected on grounds that a call for his defence is not considered "appealable".

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