

**Anwar insists new security law against human rights, wants PSC review**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 16 — Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim insisted today that the newly-proposed security law to replace the Internal Security Act (ISA) still contravenes human rights, and demanded it be referred to a Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) for review.

The opposition leader, when debating the Security Offences (Special Measures) Bill in Parliament this morning, argued that the law now transfers the power to make arbitrary arrests to the judiciary instead of the executive arm of government.

He pointed out that while the controversial 52-year-old ISA grants absolute powers to the home minister to order a person's detention, the new security law offers the same power to the courts.

"Now, all that is needed to be done is for the public prosecutor to merely suggest to the court that the individual be rearrested... what is the difference from the ISA?"

"It is just that now we are using the court process to detain a person," Anwar (picture) said.

The Bill, tabled for first reading last week as a replacement to the ISA, stipulates that those under trial for a security offence, once acquitted, upon application by the public prosecutor, can be remanded in prison pending a notice of appeal against the court's decision.

In effect, this means the accused will be kept imprisoned until all appeal avenues are exhausted.

Anwar, who is also Pakatan Rakyat (PR) de facto leader, however commended the repeal of the ISA, saying that it has been a long-time struggle of the opposition.

But he said that while Malaysia still needs laws to combat terrorism, the government should look into total reforms to the country's security framework instead of merely enacting fresh laws.

"We do not want Malaysia to be a base for terrorist activities... we do want to have tough measures against terrorism.

"Why not set up a counter-insurgency unit for the police force? Why is 30 per cent of the police force made up of the Special Branch unit that is more of a counter-Pakatan insurgency unit?"

"The institutional framework must be there... therefore, we have to oppose to the specific provisions in this Bill that is contrary to human rights provisions," he told a press conference later.

Anwar also criticised provisions in the Bill that allow for the admission of testimony from

witnesses who do not wish to be identified by the accused.

Part VI of the Bill provides for this under Section 14 (1), which stipulates that “the court may disallow such questions to be put to the witness as to his name, address, age, occupation, race or other particulars or such questions as in the opinion of the court would lead to the witness’s identification”.

According to Anwar, this would be easily open to abuse as the witness could be particularly hostile or bear grudges towards the accused, possibly leading to biased testimonies.

“The court has to accept this... so this is merely in the name of using the court but the court is shackled,” he said.

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