

Hishammuddin says Anwar 'irresponsible' for criticising new security law
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By Clara Chooi

KUALA LUMPUR, April 16 — Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein today dismissed Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's description of the Security Offences (Security Measures) Bill as "no different from the ISA (Internal Security Act)", saying it was more "irresponsible" political posturing from the opposition leader.

The home minister insisted at a press conference in Parliament here that it was obvious that the newly-proposed law was far more progressive than the 52-year-old ISA, saying that the opposition was clearly in denial if it refutes this.

Hishammuddin said the opposition was just playing politics by criticising the Bill. — File pic
"If you say that it is no different from the ISA, that means you are not a responsible opposition.

"If you want to find fault with everything, in respect of an Act that is really beyond what has been in existence since the 1960, that means they are playing politics," the Umno vice-president said.

The Security Offences (Special Measures) Bill was tabled by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak in Parliament for second reading this morning.

The Bill, which seeks to replace the highly-criticised ISA, takes away the government's right to detain a person without trial and slashes the maximum detention period from two years to 28 days.

When debating the Bill in the House, Anwar had insisted that the law still infringes on human rights as it merely transfers the power of arbitrary arrest from the government to the courts.

"For them (the opposition) to pick on one or two issues to say this law is meaningless, that means they are just playing politics... or they are in denial," Hishammuddin said.

The minister pointed to the "sunset clause" in the Bill for the 28-day detention period to be reviewed once every five years.

Section 4 (11) of the Bill states that the period "shall be reviewed every five years and shall cease to have effect unless, upon a review, a resolution is passed by both Houses of Parliament to extend the period of operation of the provision".

Hishammuddin said this review would also depend on the government's efforts to "capacity build" the police force to enable its officers to increase efficiency.

Debates on the Bill will resume tomorrow.

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