

Parliament approves new security Bill
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 17 – The Dewan Rakyat today passed the Security Offences (Special Measures) Bill, a new law that will effectively repeal the controversial Internal Security Act 1960.

Despite numerous amendments proposed to many clauses in the Bill, which opposition lawmakers argued – throughout policy and committee stage debates – still infringe on human rights, the Bill was passed by the lower House in its original form.

During committee stage debates, Dr Jeyakumar Devaraj (PSM-Sungai Siput) raised more than seven amendments to the proposed law.

He told the House that Section 4(5) of the Bill, which allows the police to keep a person detained for up to 28 days, should be tweaked to a maximum 14 days, as provided for under Section 117 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC).

“A 24-hour detention can be extended by a Sessions Court judge for up to 14 days, as provided for under the CPC,” he said.

Jeyakumar also suggested that Section 13 of the Bill be amended to allow bail for all persons detained under the Act.

This, however, should rest on whether the judge is satisfied that the accused would not be a danger to the safety of other people.

The new law, tabled for first reading last week, seeks to replace the controversial ISA, which opposition lawmakers and civil society groups have long been pushing for.

Among others, the Bill removes the government’s right to detain a person for up to two years and scraps the ISA’s most criticised element of detention without trial.

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