

Spike in Selangor crime due to EO repeal, says deputy CPO
Malaysian Insider
June 30, 2012
By Ida Lim

KUALA LUMPUR, June 30 — Selangor's deputy police chief today suggested the repeal of the Emergency Ordinance (EO) may have caused a hike in the state's crime rate due to the number of suspects who could have returned to a life of felony instead of reforming.

Last September, the federal government repealed the controversial EO, a security law introduced after the 1969 race riots that allowed the authorities to detain a person without trial for up to two years, similar to the much-criticised Internal Security Act (ISA).

It was usually used on hardcore gangsters but had also been used on children who were held in the same detention facilities as adults.

"But we see there is a rise in crime (recently) because they've been in (detention) for too long, they need 'exercise', so they come out and immediately they carry out their activities," Selangor's deputy commissioner of police, A. Thaiveegan, was reported as saying by news portal Malaysiakini today.

He was earlier reported to have said the government had released the EO detainees to give them a second chance, but was now uncertain if they had returned "to the right path".

"There may be one or two cases here and there which we are handling. There could be reasons why there is a sudden surge. There are a few criminals who have returned to society and they may take time to change (their ways).

"I can't confirm yet (because of the EO). It could be, but we will need time to confirm that. Give us another month or two then we will confirm," Thaiveegan was reported adding.

The website quoted the senior policeman as saying that even though statistics showed the crime rate in Malaysia's most developed state had dropped by 11.2 per cent, the public was still dissatisfied with the result.

A spate of high-profile kidnap attempts and robberies — some of them armed — targeting individuals, businesses and even hospitals has raised concern over public safety nationwide.

Last week, a woman was slashed in the head in the car park of the popular Mid Valley Megamall in the Klang Valley, the third reported case in a month of armed robbers seemingly targeting lone women that garnered wide media coverage.

Earlier this month, thieves carted off millions of ringgit in high-end medical gear from several hospitals around the Klang Valley, including from the public-funded University Malaya Medical Centre.

Home Minister, Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein, has said that the country's crime rate is not on the rise despite growing concern over public safety, saying that two recent violent crime cases were "isolated" incidents.

PEMANDU, the government's efficiency unit tasked with reducing the crime rate under the Government Transformation Programme (GTP), had insisted that there has been a drastic drop in such incidences and pointed instead to "unfortunate" media coverage.

But a federal lawmaker from Selangor had questioned the effectiveness of the GTP which singles out Malaysia's richest state as a 'hotspot' for crime reduction after the Home Ministry

said crime in Selangor had risen by nearly 12 per cent between 2010 and 2011 or the equivalent of a rise of 39,691 cases to 44,302.

The Home Ministry quickly issued a correction but Petaling Jaya Utara MP Tony Pua found that this was at least the third set of crime figures released for his state recently, creating further doubt over the accuracy of the government's statistics.

But Pua, DAP's publicity chief, had called on the Home Ministry and PEMANDU to "stop blaming crime on 'perception'."

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had two weeks ago said that more must be done to increase public safety, giving his assurance that the government was concerned with "all kinds of violence, including against women", despite saying that the country's general crime rate had dipped considerably.

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