

Don't repackage Sedition Act, PKR MP tells Najib
Malaysian Insider
July 12, 2012

KUALA LUMPUR, July 12 — Datuk Seri Najib Razak should kill the “draconian” Sedition Act and not replace it with another law if he is to prove his seriousness about legislative reforms and increasing civil liberties, PKR’s Nurul Izzah Anwar said today.

The opposition party’s vice-president added that if the prime minister insisted on replacing the 64-year-old law with a National Harmony law, he must make its drafting process open and transparent.

“Keadilan urges Datuk Seri Najib to abolish the Sedition Act 1948 without replacing it with any Act that has the same draconian powers, which is like dressing an anti-democratic body in new outdated draconian clothes; to prove he is a real democrat and not a false one,” she said in a statement today.

“Keadilan also urges Datuk Seri Najib to form a bi-partisan Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC) to study comprehensively the National Harmony Act he proposes (as a replacement) whereby the PSC must have the mandate to discuss issues touching on social unity and relations among the races,” she added.

The first-term Lembah Pantai MP said that while the Sedition Act’s repeal may seem a positive step at first glance, Najib’s “poor” track record on his raft of legislative reforms to increase civil liberties initiated on the eve of Malaysia Day last year have shown them to be a “political sham”.

She noted that despite promising greater freedom, the government’s language when drafting the Peaceful Assembly Act last year had led to further curbs on legitimate dissent after her father, Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, and other PKR leaders were prosecuted for taking part in the April 28 Bersih rally for clean elections.

Najib announced yesterday his intention to repeal the Sedition Act 1948, in his latest move to regain the momentum for reforms ahead of elections that must be held soon.

He said the 64-year-old law would be replaced with a National Harmony law.

Following the prime minister’s Malaysia Day address last year, the Najib administration has repealed the Internal Security Act 1960 (ISA), lifted three Emergency Declarations and enacted the Peaceful Assembly Act to regulate public gatherings.

The government has also scrapped the need for annual printing licences in the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 and lifted the ban on student participation in politics through amendments to the University and University Colleges Act 1971.

Human Rights Watch said it was eyeing with caution the government’s plan to replace the Sedition Act 1948 with a National Harmony law, saying that other “repressive” laws had been replaced with laws just as “bad or worse”.

It said the Sedition Act was “clearly a rights-abusing law” and the replacement law needs to be “consistent with international human rights standards.”

Hakcipta © 2012 The Malaysian Insider

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/dont-repackage-sedition-act-pkr-mp-tells-najib/>