

**BN bares 'true colours' in security crackdown on Pakatan, says MP
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 23 — The Najib administration has shown the spectre of 1987 looms large behind its call for a "national reconciliation" through the home ministry's crackdown today against opposition figures and their media, a DAP lawmaker has said.

PKR parliamentarian Chua Tian Chang, PAS's Tamrin Ghafar and socio-political activist Haris Ibrahim were among several prominent opposition personalities locked up by the police today over sedition claims hours after home ministry officials seized over a thousand copies of newspapers owned by the three Pakatan Rakyat (PR) political parties and deemed illegal in a separate sting nationwide.

"In a crackdown chillingly reminiscent of the 1987 Ops Lalang, the new Home Minister, Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's true colours have been revealed and the Najib's post-election charade of 'national reconciliation' is shown to be an actual nightmare of 'BN retaliation' against its political foes," Kluang MP Liew Chin Tong said in a statement.

Twenty-six years ago on October 27, the men in blue had swooped in and thrown into detention a total of 106 politicians and social activists, under the Internal Security Act (ISA) in a sting codenamed Operation Lalang.

Printing permits for three newspapers, namely The Star, Sinchew and Watan, were withdrawn.

The dreaded ISA that had been drawn up by the colonial British government to deal with communist threats in then Malaya, has since been repealed.

The security crackdown then had shocked the nation and marked the end of the boisterous, often mistaken as democratic, first phase of fourth prime minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's leadership that began in 1981.

"The politics of fear and threats have always been the hallmark of BN's administration and successive Prime Ministers, in particular Tun Mahathir, have used the triple tools of the Home Ministry, police, and oppressive laws to maintain its grip on power," Liew said.

He accused Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak of having "outsourced the 'dirty job' of oppression" to the home ministry headed by Ahmad Zahid, whose job it is to oversee the police force and internal security issues to ensure peace and the people's well-being.

"However, who are 'the people' that the Home Ministry is protecting?" the 35-year-old questioned, adding that by their actions today and over the past few days, the ministry had made it clear "it exists to serve its political masters and not the best interest of the people".

Last Saturday, 24-year-old university student activist, Adam Adli Abdul Halim was accused of attempting to overthrow the elected Barisan Nasional (BN) government through a street revolt and charged at the Sessions Court here this morning with sedition, an offence punishable by up to three years behind bars and a RM5,000 fine.

Several other DAP politicians and elected representatives were questioned by the police for

hours over remarks made during the recently concluded general election, in which they had disputed the results where the BN had gained victory though they lost the popular vote.

Those hauled in for investigation were DAP's lifetime advisor Dr Chen Man Hin, MP for Serdang, Ong Kian Ming, state assemblymen for Bilut, Chow Yu Hui, Ketari state assemblyman, Lee Chin Chen and re-elected Taiping MP Nga Kor Ming.

According to news portal Malaysiakini, Nga had claimed the investigating police officer in charge of his case revealing DAP veteran Lim Kit Siang would be called in next for questioning.

The home ministry had seized 1,408 copies of PKR-owned Suara Keadilan, 1,062 copies of PAS-owned Harakah, and 70 copies DAP-owned The Rocket for allegedly breaching their publication licence under the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984.

"This act to hold was made over failure to fulfil the conditions laid out in the Printing Presses and Publication Act 1984 (Amendment) 2012 under Section 5 in which it is an Offence to Print, Import, Publish a Newspaper Without Permit, breaching the conditions of the permit which is for distribution of members only as set by the Home Ministry.

"The enforcement operation was implemented at premises that sold the tabloid nationwide that started on 22 May 2013 taking into account monitoring action and reprimands that had been conducted by the Home Ministry before this," the statement said.

The home ministry also warned that it will continue to enforce the law "to ensure all parties do not breach the Act".

Ahmad Zahid also defended the police action today, saying the law enforcers must surely have the basis and solid evidence to detain Chua, Haris and Tamrin—son of former deputy prime minister Tun Ghafar Baba during the Mahathir years—under the Sedition Act 1948.

"I left the matter to the police and I believe they have the basis and solid evidence to detain the three, and I played no part in the operations," he was quoted by state news agency Bernama as telling reporters after attending a function at the National Registration Department here.

On whether more opposition and non-governmental organisation leaders would be detained, Ahmad Zahidi said it was up to the police.

On Monday, he had cautioned that the government would no longer issue any warnings but will take serious action against anyone who acted irresponsibly to cause public disorder in the country.

He said the Inspector-General of Police, and department heads and agencies under the ministry had the authority to carry out their responsibilities according to their jurisdiction based on the law, without political interference.

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