

PKR demands release of Tian Chua, Haris Ibrahim
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BY CLARA CHOOI

KUALA LUMPUR, May 23 — PKR has demanded the immediate release of party vice-president Chua Tian Chang and activist Haris Ibrahim, calling the Najib administration hypocrites for using the Sedition Act even after promising to abolish the pre-independence law.

In a statement today, PKR communications director Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad condemned the latest round of arrests, saying they contradicted the prime minister's promise for national reconciliation after the May 5 polls.

Chua, Haris and another opposition leader, Tamrin Ghafar of PAS, were picked up separately today for allegedly committing offences under the Sedition Act 1948, which Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak recently said would be repealed.

Reminding the prime minister of his announcement, Nik Nazmi said today's arrests only proved that the Najib administration was still stuck to more of the "same old Umno-BN policies".

"Last year, Najib said that there will be a National Harmony Act to replace draconian (Sedition) Act, yet the colonial Sedition Act remains.

"His talk of a national reconciliation after the recent elections also has proven to be meaningless," the Seri Setia assemblyman said.

Nik Nazmi (picture) was also recently charged in court with contravening the Peaceful Assembly Act 2011 over the organisation of the mammoth Pakatan Rakyat (PR) rally at the Kelana Jaya stadium in Petaling Jaya.

"Ironically, many Umno-BN leaders and their mouthpiece Utusan Malaysia continue to fan racial remarks yet no action is taken against them while other figures who speak out for democracy are being victimised.

"This shows the utter hypocrisy of Najib's administration," he said.

"KEADILAN calls for the immediate release of Tian Chua and Haris and a stop to the politically-motivated prosecution of Pakatan and NGO activists."

Earlier today, Tamrin, the Umno-turned-PAS member, had sent a text message saying: "Just 2 inform u I m being arrested by d police Bukit Aman. D police r waiting 4 me 2 finish my lunch at Chawan Bangsar. Pl inform others."

"I was arrested, now in the police car, at Jalan Kuching, heading towards the Jinjang police station," the son of former Deputy Prime Minister Tun Ghafar Baba told The Malaysian Insider in phone call later.

PKR's Chua was picked up by authorities shortly after Tamrin.

"I've been arrested at LCCT about 5min ago, just b4 the security check. Now in police

vehicle being transported to Balai Polis Jinjang,” Chua posted on his Twitter account, @tianchua at about 12.24pm today.

Earlier this morning, student activist Adam Adli Abdul Halim was charged with sedition in the Jalan Duta court complex.

The 24-year-old pleaded not guilty and was released on RM5,000 bail with his case set for a mention on July 2.

Haris was detained while lunching with friends in Segambut here after he had gone to the Jalan Duta court complex nearby earlier this morning to show support for Adam Adli.

“Haris was arrested about 12.30pm while still eating in Segambut after returning from court in Jalan Duta. He was taken to the Jinjang police station,” his friend and fellow lunch-mate Bernard Khoo told The Malaysian Insider.

“Malik Imtiaz Sarwar, his lawyer, is on the way to the police station,” he added.

Adam Adli had been arrested by the police at his home in Bangsar last Saturday before being taken to the same Jinjang police station where he had been held in remand until he was charged with attempting to topple the elected government through street protests. He was accused of uttering a seditious statement at a May 13 forum where he allegedly questioned the results of Election 2013 and called on Malaysians to take to the streets to boot Barisan Nasional (BN) from Putrajaya.

According to the charges read out this morning, his words had a seditious tendency and were aimed at rallying Malaysians to change the current government through undemocratic means.

His statement, in Malay: “Take my details, lodge a police report, because today, I would like to invite all those here today to gather and take to the streets to seize back our power! Can we do that? Can we do that? Can we do that? We do not have much time left, get ready, buy shoes, buy tracksuits, buy jeans, get ready to take to the streets because in a third world country like Malaysia, elections cannot topple a government.

“Only the people’s power can topple a government. Remember, ladies and gentlemen, this is the only opportunity we have.”

Charged under Section 4(1)(b) of the Sedition Act 1948, the Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris undergraduate faces a jail term of not less three years, or a fine of up to RM5,000 or both, if convicted.

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