

PKR, DAP members appeal for leniency towards Merlion Park protesters
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SINGAPORE, May 24 — By means of a memorandum and a statement, Malaysian opposition politicians yesterday urged the Singapore authorities to show leniency to 21 people arrested for an illegal gathering at the Merlion Park earlier this month.

A group of PKR politicians handed the memorandum to the Singapore High Commission in Kuala Lumpur yesterday morning, while Teo Nie Ching, the DAP MP for Kulai, released a statement in the afternoon.

The PKR members — including vice-presidents Nurul Izzah Anwar and Chua Jui Meng — called on the authorities to “exercise restraint and give those arrested a second chance”, reported the Free Malaysia Today news portal. Bersih co-chairperson Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan was also present.

The arrests on May 11 came after two gatherings staged by Malaysians here — on May 8 and 11 — shortly after Malaysia’s general election on May 5.

Speaking to reporters yesterday, Chua read from the memorandum: “We recognise the need for Malaysians in Singapore to respect the laws of Singapore. However, we call on the authorities to exercise proportionality and fairness in applying the law.”

Nurul Izzah, daughter of de facto opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, reportedly added: “We hope the Singaporean authorities would take into consideration that the Malaysians are working there. Without a permit to enter Singapore, how are they to continue earning a livelihood?”

Teo highlighted the plight of one of those arrested, whose employment pass was revoked. This means the scholarship holder “won’t be able to fulfil her contract and as such, she will have to pay S\$100,000 (RM240,000) to her employer as compensation”. She declined to reveal what scholarship this was.

In her statement, she also claimed that the 18 Malaysians under investigation are not allowed to leave Singapore, for now. This has caused difficulties for those who had been travelling daily to Singapore for work, and they have to stay in hotels for the time being, she said.

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