

Pakatan says not intimidated by home minister's strong-arm tactics
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By Opalyn Mok

GEORGE TOWN, May 24 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) is not intimidated by the strong-arm tactics employed by the Home Ministry that resulted in the arrest of two PR leaders and a political activist, said DAP national chairman Karpal Singh.

"It is obvious that this is another Ops Lallang in the offing," he said.

The seasoned lawyer expressed his surprise that the newly-minted Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi decided to go on a "rampage" to prosecute opposition leaders.

"I would have thought that by taking over the Home Ministry, it would have slowed him down but instead he is condoning the police actions and arrest of Pakatan Rakyat leaders," Karpal (picture) told a press conference here today.

He said Ahmad Zahid could say it was the police who were acting and the arrests had nothing to do with him but that was not true.

"This is an outright lie; no Inspector-General of Police acts without the sanction of the Home Ministry," he said.

Yesterday, the police detained PKR vice-president Chua Tian Chang, PAS leader Tamrin Ghafar and political activist Haris Ibrahim for allegedly making seditious remarks during a forum on May 13.

Labelling it as another round of "Mahathirism", Karpal, the Bukit Gelugor MP, said these actions would not intimidate PR leaders and would serve to anger the voters even more.

"It is obvious that the people are angry, we can see that in the 505 rallies, and having only 47 per cent of the popular vote Barisan Nasional (BN) is in fact a minority government," Karpal said.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak must take into account the 51 per cent voters who had rejected BN.

"Until and unless there is reconciliation with the 51 per cent, there won't be a proper administration of the country," he said.

On the redelineation of electoral constituencies by the Election Commission, Karpal hoped it would ensure that there will be a "one-person, one-vote" scenario in all constituencies as much as possible.

"You can't have one MP for 15,000 voters in Putrajaya and one MP for 140,000 voters in Kapar.

"The disparity allowed is at most 15 per cent but between Kapar and Putrajaya, it was a disparity of more than 900 per cent," he said.

He hoped the redelineation exercise won't be done at the expense of the rakyat.

He also said there should not be an increase in seats in PR states where PR has more than a two-thirds majority.

The EC has announced that it would conduct a study on the redelineation of electoral constituencies soon.

The redelineation, which was postponed two years ago, has to be carried out once every eight years as provided for in Article 113 (2) (ii) of the Federal Constitution.

The last redelineation exercise was conducted in 2003.

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