

**Opposition crackdown shows reforms a lie, say Pakatan leaders**  
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**By Syed Jaymal Zahiid**

PETALING JAYA, May 24 — The security dragnet on opposition leaders and critics this past week is the clearest sign yet that the Barisan Nasional (BN) government was never honest in wanting real political reforms, Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders told a rally here last night.

They told a crowd of some 5,000 that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had promised to repeal the Sedition Act as a step towards greater civil liberties but the arrests of four men under the law meant the reforms pledges were only designed to win votes in Election 2013.

“What were we promised? By Barisan Nasional and the minority prime minister? Did they not say that the era of government knows best is over? That democracy will flourish under the pillars of 1 Malaysia?”

“Did they also not promise to abolish the Sedition Act? We have been had! We have been had by the BN government,” PKR vice-president Nurul Izzah Anwar told a PR “thanksgiving” rally last night.

PKR Batu MP Chua Tian Chang, PAS’s Datuk Tamrin Ghafar and political activist Haris Ibrahim were arrested yesterday for sedition and detained overnight at the Jinjang police station in Kuala Lumpur for investigation under section 4(1)(c) of the Sedition Act and section 124 of the Penal Code.

Najib had promised to abolish the law when he announced a slew of political reforms which included the repeal of the Internal Security Act not long before Election 2013 was held.

Chua, Tamrin who was once Batu Berendam MP and Anything But Umno (ABU) chief Haris were arrested separately yesterday afternoon in an apparent national crackdown on opposition supporters.

All three are believed to be detained over their involvement in a May 13 forum on the results of the just-concluded general election.

A view of the crowd at last night’s rally. The first to be detained from the forum was student activist Adam Adli Abdul Halim, who was charged with sedition in the Jalan Duta court complex yesterday morning.

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

Claiming the election had been rigged, PR has so far refused to recognise the Election 2013 results that saw Najib’s BN retaining power but with a smaller majority. His coalition had also lost the popular vote which makes it a minority government.

Former Umno law minister Datuk Zaid Ibrahim said the crackdown signalled BN’s fear towards the opposition’s growing strength, and that a clampdown was the only way for Najib to ensure his coalition would stay in power.

He also pointed out that the arrests under the Sedition Act were made despite Najib’s

pledge to repeal the law.

"They knew that PR had won more than 50 per cent of the popular vote and that they had won through cheating... and now you have all these arrests when Najib had promised to abolish the Sedition Act," he said.

Former DAP Selangor State Assembly Speaker Datuk Teng Chang Khim claimed the crackdown was engineered to appease Umno's hardliners and consolidate Najib's position as he is likely to be challenged at the party polls following his poor performance in Election 2013.

"He is in a mess. He's afraid. So that is why he is showing the Umno hardliners that he can be tough," he said.

Yesterday, a DAP lawmaker suggested that the Najib administration has shown the spectre of 1987 looms large behind its call for a "national reconciliation" through the Home Ministry's crackdown yesterday against opposition figures and their media.

Newly appointed Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, however, defended the police action, saying the law enforcers must surely have the basis and solid evidence to make the arrests.

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