

**Raise sedition crackdown complaints in Parliament, Zahid tells Pakatan Malaysian Insider**  
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**By Syed Jaymal Zahiid**

KAJANG, May 31 — Pakatan Rakyat (PR) leaders should raise their opposition to the arrests of government critics under the Sedition Act in Parliament, Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said today.

“Just raise it in Parliament,” he told reporters when asked about the opposition’s accusations that the Najib administration was using the colonial-era law to clamp down on dissenters despite promising to repeal the Act.

Three days ago, five men were charged under the Sedition Act with uttering words that have the tendency to call on Malaysians to change the government by unlawful means.

All four — politicians Tamrin Ghafar and Chua Tian Chang along with activists Haris Ibrahim and Muhammad Safwan Anang — pleaded not guilty when the charges under section 4 (1) (b) the Act were jointly read out to them in the Sessions Court.

PR has described the arrests as part of a national crackdown on the federal opposition.

The authorities said the arrests were made in relation to a May 13 forum where the four had made seditious statements by calling on the public to overthrow the government through violent street demonstrations.

At the forum at the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (KLSCAH), Tamrin had, among others, allegedly agreed to take to the streets to demand for rights, while Chua had also mentioned that leaders should follow suit if the people wanted to go to the streets.

Chua’s lawyer, N. Surendran, said he will file an application in the High Court to strike out the charges on the grounds that they amounted to an abuse of process, selective prosecution and being unconstitutional.

Tamrin and Safwan’s lawyers said they will also file similar applications in the High Court separately to strike out the cases.

Haris’ lawyer, Gobind Singh Deo, told the judge that he would submit two motions to strike, one in the High Court and another in the Sessions Court, with the latter application on the basis that a “groundless charge” was directed at his client.

Last week, student activist Adam Adli Abdul Halim was charged with sedition for his involvement in the same forum where he was accused of rallying Malaysians to take to the streets to topple the BN government.

Human rights hero Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan had said that Putrajaya will only face more wrath from right-thinking Malaysians if it continues its nationwide crackdown on opposition supporters.

The civil rights activist and renowned lawyer said the sudden series of arrests and court charges exposes the new government’s true face and intentions, which contradict its earlier promise for national reconciliation.

Following a divisive national polls, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said his government would embark on a "national reconciliation" programme.

PR leaders, activists and opposition supporters nationwide have been protesting the results of the just-concluded May 5 polls, which saw BN returned to federal power despite earning only a minority of the total number of votes cast.

Due to the uneven dispersal of votes in numerous constituencies across Malaysia, which the opposition has labelled gerrymandering, BN emerged victors with just under 48 per cent of the popular vote to PR's 51 per cent by snapping up 133 federal seats or 60 per cent of the 222 seats contested.

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