

**Stop threatening politicians with Sedition laws, says PKR's Latheefa
Malaysian Insider
Aug 15 , 2013
BY RITA JONG**

Barisan Nasional has been urged to stop abusing the Sedition Act just to silence opposition politicians who criticised the government.

The call came from Parti Keadilan Rakyat's head of legal and human rights bureau Latheefa Koya (pic) in reference to Khairy Jamaluddin's police report against Sarawak DAP chief Chong Chieng Jen over the latter's statement that the escalating crime rate was BN's drama to re-introduce preventive detention laws.

"This is a serious allegation which must be addressed by the government and cannot be dismissed as merely being seditious, especially since there is a sudden increase in violent crimes," Latheefa said in a statement.

She said it is also "frightening" that there is also an increase in the number of calls for the reinstatement of preventive detention, and lack of other serious measures to deal with the escalating crime.

Latheefa said Khairy, who is also BN Youth leader, must remember the basic requirement for the application of sedition laws in Malaysia - that no matter how obnoxious, it cannot be applied for statements made against political parties including BN, regardless whether they are in the government or not.

Khairy lodged a police report yesterday against Chong for the latter's statement in the Borneo Post that the rise in shooting cases in the country was part of the BN drama.

Chong had alleged that murder cases involving firearms were allowed to spread so that the government can formulate and introduce a new law to replace the Emergency Ordinance (EO).

On Sunday, Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi told the Umno-owned media Mingguan Malaysia that the just-released 2,600 EO detainees were to be blamed for the recent spike in shooting cases.

He had also said there were now some 260,000 criminals roaming the streets. He reached that figure after claiming that the 2,600 released detainees have at least 10 followers each and each follower would have their own set of right-hand men as well. - August 15, 2013.

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