

Preventive detention won't work if life is good behind bars, says MIC Youth chief
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Under the scrapped Emergency Ordinance, some gangsters lived a life of comfort behind bars, having access to mobile phones, alcohol and good food.

This was made possible because of corruption within the police force, said MIC Youth chief T. Mohan today. He added that if this corruption is not tackled, the return of preventive detention under the Prevention of Crime Act (PCA) will be ineffective and will not be a deterrent to gangsterism.

"I am only referring to some of them. In general, police are doing a good job but there is corruption in the force that allowed these criminals many privileges while under detention," said Mohan after attending a seminar on crime organised by the Youth and Sports Ministry today.

"As long as some elements in the police take bribes these measures are not going to work," he said.

On Wednesday, Putrajaya tabled the proposed amendments to the PCA to give it the power to detain hardcore criminals for up to two years without trial.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi immediately described the PCA and the related 10 Bills up for amendment as "transformation".

"You are wrong if you say it's draconian," he said in Parliament, countering opposition claims that the act was similar to the repealed Internal Security Act and Emergency Ordinance.

The proposed amendments exclude the provision of judicial review, except for procedural measures.

Presently, under the PCA, suspects can be detained up to 72 days. However, it is required that they be produced in court at certain stages during the 72-day detention. It was effectively used before the ISA was enacted decades ago.

Mohan said the Ops Cantas recently launched to much fanfare by police saw thousands detained under the PCA but little had been done to charge those detained with any crime.

"How many were charged? They were detained for nine, 14 days then put back on the street," said Mohan.

Ops Cantas was launched on August 17 following an increase in cases involving serious crimes, like murder, robbery and rape.

Police detained 11,036 individuals nationwide under the operation.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar said 47 of them were detained for investigation under the PCA and the remainder for various other offences.

The police also seized 23 firearms, 14 home-made air rifles, a hand grenade, 1,238 rounds of ammunition and various other weapons, including machetes and knives, he told the media a few days ago.

He said 304 secret society members had also been detained in the operation and they included 60 people from Geng 04, 110 from Geng 08, 12 from Geng 18, and 60 from Geng 36.

Mohan also questioned why police, while knowing that thousands were involved in gangsterism, did not take action previously.

"Why now? They already know this. They even have the names of these people," he said. – September 28, 2013.

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