

Was Attorney-General sidelined during PCA amendments? Bersih asks at Suaram protest

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Bersih co-chair Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan led a group of human rights activists in protest outside Parliament this morning against the amendments to the Prevention of Crime Act being debated this week.

The lawyer questioned if the Attorney-General was sidelined when Putrajaya formed the amendments.

She said Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail had recently voiced out that he was in a disagreement with preventive detention.

"Did the government not take the AG's advice? I want to know whether the AG was consulted, as he has made it clear he does not agree with this," she said to about 50 protesters during the rally.

The protest was organised by non-government organisation Suaram to stop the amendments to the PCA being passed.

While holding placards stating "Take PCA back", the group also labelled the PCA as the Internal Security Act 2.0.

"We don't need such acts to curb crime. We have facilities for the police to fight crime," Ambiga said.

"We celebrated the repeal of ISA but not more than a year later, the ISA seems to have returned in different forms."

She said the worst aspect of the bill was that Malaysians were "misled".

"Don't believe those who say that we need this (law) to fight crime. Other countries do not have detention without trial (to fight crime). They help the police," Ambiga said.

She also pointed out that Home Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi himself seems to have "misread the bill".

"He says there is no detention without trial but this is their appreciation of the bill. My reading as a lawyer is different... In the first two years (of detention) there is no real recourse, and no right to legal representation," she said. – September 30, 2013.

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