

Sedition Act being used for political mileage

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Barisan Nasional (BN)-led government is accused of using the Sedition Act for its own political agenda.

Communication and Multimedia Minister Ahmad Shabery Cheek yesterday said those who violated the Sedition Act 1948 will continue to face the music as long as the law was not repealed.

Pakatan Rakyat MPs, however, said Shabery's statement went against Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak's promise in 2012 that the Sedition Act would be replaced with the National Harmony Act.

"They promised before the last election that the Sedition Act will be abolished," said Kapar MP G Manivannan. "But soon after the election, they are getting more inclined towards draconian laws."

The PKR member said Umno in particular was taking advantage of the situation to prove to the rural Malays that that they were the defenders of Malay rights.

"Karpal's conviction was not to punish him per se, nor was it because they want to uphold the Sultan's sovereignty. They are merely using it for political gain.

"They simply want to show the rural Malays that the non-Malays should not question the sovereignty of the Agong," he said.

Karpal was found guilty of sedition by the High Court over a remark he made in 2009 where he said the Perak sultan could be taken to court for removing Mohd Nizar Jamaluddin as the Perak MB.

Shabery should to resign

The Bukit Gelugor MP was fined RM4,000 and risks losing his parliamentary seat should he fail to make an appeal to the higher court for his conviction to be overturned or a lesser fine.

Bayan Baru MP Sim Tze Tzin echoed his PKR colleague saying that the government was simply using the Act as a political tool to curtail the Opposition.

"It is an old draconian law previously used by the British, why continue using it? Najib promised that the Act would be replaced. Shabery should to resign for contradicting the PM," he said.

Wangsa Maju MP Tan Kee Kwong said everyone was simply confused over the matter.

“The Prime Minister said a different thing while a minister says something else,” he said.

He opined that Karpal was not being seditious when he made the comment and asked why no action was taken against Perak Mufti Harussani Zakaria instead.

Harussani, early this year, said that it was permissible to shed the blood of the anti-price hike Turun rally goers as they were rebels.

DAP’s Kota Melaka MP Sim Tong Him said Najib’s administration was still invoking the Sedition Act despite having promised to repeal it as they want to prevent Opposition members from speaking up.

“We already have enough laws, such as the penal code to charge people in court for seditious acts. Why must you use the law which is about to be repealed?” he said

He urged Najib to provide an explanation or the latter risked being seen as going back on his word.

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