

## **Najib administration ratcheting up its campaign against Pakatan Rakyat via courts**

**Malaysian Insider**

**May 5, 2014**

**By Jennifer Gomez**

The Najib administration is ratcheting up its campaign against Pakatan Rakyat through the court system and it is going to be a dangerous journey for dissidents in the country.

Tomorrow, Seputeh MP Teresa Kok will be charged with sedition at the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court.

And hours ago, Selangor deputy speaker Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad's office was informed that he was going to be re-charged under the same section of the Peaceful Assembly Act that he had been acquitted a few days earlier.

According to lawyer Latheefa Koya, lawyer Eric Paulsen had gone to the Sessions Court today, which was set to mention Nik Nazmi's case, to inform the court that the Seri Setia assemblyman had been acquitted.

However, the DPP Wan Shahrudin Wan Ladin informed the court that he would be appealing against the decision.

Paulsen then stood his ground that there already was an acquittal order on Nik Nazmi from the Court of Appeal.

Barely hours later, the police informed Nik Nazmi's legal team that the attorney-general had instructed that he be charged under the same section of the PAA.

The Court of Appeal had ruled on April 25 that Section 9 (5) of the Peaceful Assembly Act (PAA), providing for punishment for failure to give 10 days' notice to the authorities before a protest, was unconstitutional.

A three-man bench led by judge Datuk Mohamad Ariff Md Yusof ruled that Section 9 (5) of the act presented "some conceptual difficulty" as it considered peaceful assemblies lawful regardless of compliance with the notice.

"That which is fundamentally lawful cannot be criminalised," he had said when reading out a section of the judgment.

In welcoming the judgment, lawyers and lawmakers had said this meant the public could assemble freely without worrying about any action being taken against them unless they destroyed property or committed criminal acts.

Another opposition politician to be charged with sedition is PKR vice-president and Batu MP Tian Chua, who had tweeted that Prime Minister Najib Razak would not last five months if opposition de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim goes to prison for sodomy.

Tian Chua told The Malaysian Insider that he had not heard from the police since he was questioned by them on March 19.

"I don't understand what is taking them so long and why they have to hold on to my iPad and handphone. If they are probing me for sedition, its either I said it or not," said the politician, who had been charged twice before with sedition.

He added that Najib now held the record as the prime minister who had used the Sedition Act the most in a short span of time.

The late Karpal Singh was fined RM4,000 by the Kuala Lumpur High Court on March 11 after he was found guilty under the Sedition Act for questioning the removal of Datuk Seri Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin as Perak menteri besar by the Sultan of Perak in February 2009.

Following his guilty conviction, the veteran lawyer resigned as DAP chairman while he appealed against the sentence.

Karpal and his aide, Michael Cornelius, however, died in an accident on April 17 when the multipurpose vehicle they were travelling in collided with a lorry near Gua Tempurung in Perak on the North-South Expressway. – May 5, 2014.

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Source: <http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/najib-administration-ratcheting-up-its-campaign-against-pakatan-rakyat-via>