

**PKR wants Putrajaya to stop sedition dragnet against Pakatan
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Another Pakatan Rakyat leader has joined the chorus of voices calling for Putrajaya to stop the witch-hunt against its leaders and for the prime minister to fulfil his pledge to abolish the Sedition Act which he made more than two years ago.

Newly minted PKR youth chief Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad (pic) said Datuk Seri Najib Razak's pledge in July 2012 to abolish the act in line with the government's transformation plan is now seen as an empty promise.

Instead, more Pakatan leaders lately were either investigated or charged by the authorities under the act.

"It is as though the act is only aimed at Pakatan leaders, whereas no action was taken against other BN leaders, as well as those from Isma and Perkasa, who had issued criminally-charged statements," Nik Nazmi said in a statement.

The move, described as Putrajaya's attempt at silencing its political foes, has seen Pakatan leaders being charged with sedition over the last few days.

They are: PKR vice-presidents Rafizi Ramli and N. Surendran, Shah Alam MP and PAS central committee member Khalid Samad, and DAP Seri Delima assemblyman R. S. N. Rayer.

In citing an example of "selective prosecution", Nik Nazmi said he had lodged a police report two months ago against the Negri Sembilan chapter of Perkasa and its leader Ruslan Kassim for allegedly threatening to behead four PAS MPs. But, to date, no action had been taken.

The MPs had reportedly called for the powers of Selangor Islamic Religious Council to be limited, following the seizure of Malay- and Iban-language Bibles by the state

religious authorities early this year.

Ruslan had reportedly clarified that he was referring to "political beheading" where leaders were punished by voters through democratic means.

Nik Nazmi said if Najib was true to his word, the draconian act should be abolished immediately.

"Stop the prosecution and attacks against Pakatan leaders immediately. With the abolishment of the act, no one can be suppressed for being vocal in expressing their views or criticising the government."

Election watchdog Bersih 2.0 had expressed concern at the continued use of the act "to silence dissenters and freedom of speech".

"Considering the latest developments, it is clear that the Sedition Act will continue to be used as a weapon to silence dissenting voices.

"This is clear infringement of democratic spirit which always encourages different opinions and voices," its chairperson, Maria Chin Abdullah, said.

Najib promised to abolish archaic and draconian acts when he took over the administration of the country in 2009, and he had succeeded in keeping his promise when he abolished the Internal Security Act 1960 and the Emergency Ordinance 1969.

Both laws had allowed for detention for trial, something which civil rights group had vociferously opposed.

But, the premier has yet to abolish the Sedition Act despite talks that he would replace it with a National Harmony Act. – August 28, 2014.

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