

Najib promises consultation on changes to Sedition Act
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PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak has given an assurance that all stakeholders will be consulted on proposed changes involving the Sedition Act and the National Harmony Bill.

He said that whatever amendments to be made would be done with integrity and transparency and under controlled conditions to ensure that laws to be introduced would be better than the existing legislation.

He called for a rational process as the Government continues to study the Act and proposed changes and continued talks with the relevant stakeholders.

“Of course, the groups with the louder voice now are those representing the Malays and we must seek to understand the concerns close to their hearts, such as matters relating to Islam, the Malay rulers, and Article 153 of the Federal Constitution.

“We must understand all this so that if a decision is made, we will not cause Malays or non-Malays to feel worried or threatened.

“We must handle this process well so that whatever decision made will augur well for our future. The Government will not do something that can cause instability or incite anger in any community in our country,” Najib said at the Prime Minister Department’s monthly staff gathering here yesterday.

Article 153 grants the Yang di-Pertuan Agong responsibility for safeguarding the position of the Malays and natives of Sabah and Sarawak as well as the legitimate interests of the non-Malays.

On July 11, 2012, Najib announced that the Sedition Act 1948 would be repealed and replaced with a National Harmony Act as part of the country’s political transformation plan.

Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Nancy Shukri has confirmed receiving several drafted Bills, including from the National Unity Consultative Council, on the proposed National Harmony Act but said there was no decision yet to finalise the consultation process.

She had reportedly said that the Bill on the proposed new Act was still in the early stage of formulation.

On Sunday, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said that the Government has not made any decision to abolish or amend the Act, nor replace it with a new Act.

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