

Dr Mahathir tells former IGP to try the death sentence

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The former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Musa Hassan "should try the death penalty on himself", Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today on Musa's call that the Sedition Act include capital punishment.

Musa had said that the Sedition Act should not be retained but instead be amended to include stiffer punishments, including the death penalty.

"Maybe he (Musa) should try it himself," said Dr Mahathir, Malaysia's longest serving prime minister from 1981 to 2003.

Dr Mahathir's comment comes amid Putrajaya's blitz against political opponents and others who have voiced critical opinions deemed seditious under the act's loose definition. Dr Mahathir himself had used the now-repealed Internal Security Act during Operasi Lalang in 1987 and 1988 to curtail political dissent.

The former prime minister had also curbed the authority of the royals with constitutional amendments in 1993 to remove their immunity from criminal prosecution.

However, Umno divisions and a group called Gerakan Warganegara Mempertahankan Akta Hasutan 1948 have called for the Sedition Act to be retained to protect the position of the Malays, Islam and the royalty.

Musa had given his support to the group which was launched yesterday.

Dr Mahathir was asked about the current spate of arrests and charges under the Sedition Act at a book launch he attended today, but appeared reluctant to comment other than to make the quip about Musa trying the death penalty himself.

Musa, who was IGP from 2006 to 2010, had said that stiffer punishments, like the death penalty, were needed for those who were repeat offenders.

He was also quoted by Berita Harian today as saying that the Sedition Act should not be abolished simply to satisfy the demands of certain quarters.

"I believe that those who always incite and do this purposely should be given a stiffer punishment. The laws are there but they still do it even though they know it is wrong."

Musa suggested that Malaysia should follow Singapore, which still retains the Internal Security Act (ISA) as well as the Sedition Act. – September 11, 2014.

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