

Sedition Act exit would mean open season on royalty, Dr M warns
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KUALA LUMPUR, June 30 — Repealing the Sedition Act could lead to chaos in the country by opening the floodgates of criticism against the Malay rulers and turn Malaysia into a republic, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad asserted today in his latest broadside at Putrajaya's plan to repeal the law.

The former prime minister reminded the government that it has already given up the Internal Security Act (ISA), another previously criticised security law, and would be left with nothing to muzzle the detractors of the Malay royalty if it also surrenders the Sedition Act.

Extremists would take their new-found freedom to criticise and possibly demand the elimination of the royalty, which is considered a key institution of the dominant Malay community.

"Many may be angered by the incitement to remove the system of monarchy. But because sedition is allowed, those who are interested in creating a Republic of Malaysia will be free and entitled to carry on their campaign," he wrote on his chedet blog today.

"It is possible that chaos will take place in the country. This is due to the flaws of the liberal attitude that we are idolising now."

Previously, Dr Mahathir also criticised plans to replace the Sedition Act with three separate laws on national harmony, warning that it would push a meritocratic system that would exacerbate existing inequality among races.

The former prime minister also repeated his previous criticism of Putrajaya's decision to remove the ISA as well as Emergency Ordinance, saying that crime has risen as a result of the abolition of the two security laws.

In 2012, Putrajaya pledged to repeal the Sedition Act as part of its reforms to afford Malaysians greater civil liberties.

It subsequently tasked the National Unity Consultative Council (NUCC) to draw up laws to replace the colonial era law.

Earlier this month, the NUCC unveiled three draft bills — Racial and Religious Hate Crimes Bill, National Harmony and Reconciliation Bill and National Harmony and Reconciliation Commission Bill — that it is proposing to take the place of the law it described as a leftover from British colonial rule.

But the council is meeting with increasing resistance over its proposals, which critics — mainly from the Malay-Muslim community — allege would undermine Bumiputera special privileges.

Despite its pledge to repeal the Sedition Act, Putrajaya continues to apply it to cases of public, notably against opposition lawmakers and activist, leading to allegations that the law was being used to silence critics of the government.

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