

Former Umno minister slams Najib, says red shirts unhappy with ISA repeal
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The "red shirt" rally should be seen as a final warning to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak to redeem himself in the eyes of the Malay race and to earn back their trust in the country's Malay-Muslim leadership, a former Umno minister said.

Writing in his blog, Tan Sri Zainuddin Maidin also said that one of the chief demands of the thousands of Malays who gathered in Kuala Lumpur yesterday was for the prime minister to bring back the Internal Security Act (ISA) which had been repealed.

He felt that this was the main bone of contention among rally-goers, saying they blamed the repeal of the pre-colonial law as the reason why the Malays and Islam were being insulted under the Najib administration.

Zainuddin, a former veteran newsman with Umno-owned Utusan Malaysia, also accused the prime minister of unilaterally making the decision to repeal the ISA with the hope of getting the support of non-Malays, but added that instead, Najib was "slapped" with a Chinese tsunami and an international plot to topple him.

The former information minister also hit out at English daily The Star for highlighting sensitive issues on Islam, including deriding the religion for its policy on dogs and accusing national schools of placing temporary canteens next to toilets for non-Muslim kids during the Ramadan fasting month.

"The newspaper also got support from the Prime Minister's Department to promote liberalism under their moderation campaign by using Malay liberals to ridicule the spirit of nationalism in the Constitution as a narrow-minded thinking by the Malays.

"PMO never confronted them because Najib was afraid of becoming unpopular among the non-Malays and so he never dared to repeat his Chinese tsunami accusation a second time after losing in the 2013 general election," he wrote.

Zainuddin said many of the demands at the rally were meant to save Najib from being ousted.

He said the slogans at the rally yesterday were far worse than the "Chinese tsunami" accusation by Najib, adding however it was open knowledge that the prime minister was behind the rally.

"Whatever it is, it all depends whether he is willing to bring back the ISA and not use it in a flip flop manner or for personal gain," Zainuddin added.

The "red shirt" rally, also called Himpunan Rakyat Bersatu, was held to counter last month's Bersih 4 rally, which yesterday's rally organisers claimed had insulted the

integrity of the Malay race.

Pekida president Jamaluddin Yusof described the "red shirt" rally as a "jihad" and said 10,000 members from the Malay NGO were present.

Police had declared the rally legal, but said three areas – Bukit Bintang, Petaling Street and the area around Low Yat Plaza – were off-limits to protesters.

Najib had said he would not stop Umno members from participating in the rally but stopped short of endorsing the gathering.

The rally came under fierce criticism from opposition parties and civil society groups, as well as from Umno Supreme Council members Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Datuk Seri Shafie Apdal.

Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and former international trade and industry minister Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz also criticised the rally. – September 17, 2015.

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