

Sedition Act 1948 Not A Political Tool Of Government - Khairy Jamaluddin
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JOHOR BAHRU, Dec 6 (Bernama) -- The Sedition Act 1948 is not a political tool of the government to prevent any criticism against it or restrict the people's freedom of speech, said Youth and Sports Minister Khairy Jamaluddin here today.

Khairy, who is also the Umno Youth head, said the purpose of the Sedition Act was clearly to prevent any group from issuing statements to incite the people or insult the race, religion and the Malay rulers.

"The Sedition Act 1948 is not a political tool. It's alright to criticise the government. There is no criticism (against the government) that we can charge under the Sedition Act, but if there are actions that go overboard, that insult the religion or race, then those acts are seditious.

"The Sedition Act is not to protect any political party, but a shield for every Malaysian," he said at a media conference, here after attending a forum on 'Racial Harmony'.

At the forum, Khairy was a member of the panelists together with law practitioner JR Tey, answering various questions on issues concerning racial harmony and the Sedition Act 1948.

Besides statements that insult the race, religion and the monarchy, action under the Sedition Act 1948 could also be taken against statements calling for the secession of Sabah and Sarawak from Malaysia, he said.

The Youth and Sports Minister pointed out that enforcement of the Sedition Act must also be fair regardless of racial or religious background, or the individual's position.

"The implementation (of the act) must be fair," he said.

On the statement by the United States Ambassador to Malaysia, Joseph Y Yun yesterday who was 'puzzled' at Malaysia's decision to retain the Sedition Act 1948, Khairy said he had met with Yun yesterday.

He said that at the meeting, he had explained to Yun on the decision of the government to retain the Sedition Act 1948.

"He (Yun) told me that the Malaysian government must make a clarification to the international community. I believe we can make the clarification so that they will understand why we retain the Sedition Act," he said.

The clarification on the Sedition Act, he said, did not mean that the country was seeking

permission from the international community to retain the act, but merely to clarify why we were retaining it.

The Umno Youth head also said that the statement by United States Vice-President Joe Biden in his Twitter website regarding the trial involving Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, was interfering in the internal affairs of Malaysia.

"This is interfering in our country's judiciary. It is the Malaysian judiciary that decides on the case and not for the US Vice-President to tell us.

It is to preempt the decision of the court," he said.

Khairy said this major power must 'look at the mirror first' before criticising Malaysia because it was also facing various crises including racial issues and police violence.

"They must also close down the detention centre at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba which was holding more than 200 detainees without trial," he added.

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