

**Najib using courts to disqualify rivals before elections, says Bersih
Malaysian Insider
Nov 12, 2015
By Ram Anand**

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak is trying to eliminate political opponents using the courts even before elections have taken place, electoral watchdog group Bersih 2.0 said.

In a joint press conference today with human rights watchdog Suara Rakyat Malaysia (Suaram), it said that the slew of opposition politicians who were charged under the Sedition Act and also the Peaceful Assembly Act (PAA) were attempts to disqualify opponents from standing for elections.

Many of those charged are opposition politicians and, if convicted, could disqualify them from contesting in the next general election, due before mid-2018. There is also the Sarawak election for legislative seats due early next year.

"They can't contest in the Sarawak elections and also the general election," said Bersih chairman Maria Chin Abdullah.

Suaram and Bersih today listed 18 active politicians from the opposition bloc who are facing charges under the two acts.

"He is trying to eliminate opposition before the elections," Maria said.

Bersih 2.0 steering committee member Dr Wong Chin Huat (pic, right), meanwhile, said that Najib is trying to disrupt political opponents with the charges.

"He is trying to win the elections by using courts and all these persecutions," he said.

Suaram project coordinator Debby Chow said that more than 200 people have been charged with sedition since Najib's promise to abolish the colonial era legislation.

"I do not know how the climate of fear is now compared with the one during Ops Lalang back in 1987," he said, referring to the arrest of dozens of people under the now-repealed Internal Security Act (ISA) in October 1987.

"But back then we only had fierce government critics being arrested. Now you have a normal layman on the street being arrested," he added.

Najib backtracked on his promise to abolish the act last year, and instead said that the act would be strengthened.

Among those facing charges under Sedition and PAA includes Selangor Menteri Besar Azmin Ali, DAP parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang, and Amanah communications director Khalid Samad. – November 12, 2015

Copyright © 2015 Edge Insider Sdn Bhd

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/najib-using-courts-to-disqualify-rivals-before-elections-says-bersih>