

NSC Bill will not make for safer Malaysia, Ambiga tells Najib
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Datuk Ambiga Sreenevasan said today Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak took an "opportunistic view" to claim that the National Security Council (NSC) law would help Putrajaya deal with terror threats following the Jakarta bomb attacks.

Speaking on behalf of the #TakNakDiktator coalition, she said the movement was shocked and appalled by Najib's remark as Indonesian authorities did not fall back on special laws like NSC Bill to curb the security threat.

"The Indonesian authorities treated the terror attack as a law-and-order issue and it was dealt with swiftly and professionally.

"The Indonesian authorities did not use powers akin to an emergency or any powers remotely similar to the NSC Bill to declare a 'security area' for six months in order to take control of the situation."

Ambiga said under the NSC Bill, the authorities were allowed arbitrary powers to use violence and deadly force in arrests, search and seizures of a "security area".

She said curfews could also be imposed in such declared zones and the possession of land, buildings and moveable property or destruction of unoccupied structures was also allowed.

"The powers conferred in the NSC Bill are far too wide, arbitrary and disproportionate to any terror threats currently faced by Malaysia.

"There is simply little correlation between any terrorist activities and the powers conferred in the NSC Bill that seeks to concentrate extraordinary powers within the hands the prime minister and the NSC."

She said it was "outrageous" for Najib to conclude that the NSC law could be used to address terror attacks similar to the one in Jakarta, when there were already existing laws to quell such threats.

"The police are already armed with wide powers to tackle any terrorist activities and in recent years, the government has brought in controversial legislation, such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2015 (POTA), the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act 2012 (Sosma), the Prevention of Crime Act 1959 (with substantial amendments in 2014) and the 2012 amendments to the Penal Code that added numerous offences against the state.

"Malaysia does not need the NSC law as this is nothing more than an attempt by the prime minister to usurp more power and centralise that power in him.

"This goes against all principles of democracy and undermines the rule of law in the

country.”

She said the coalition, comprising groups such as Amnesty International Malaysia, Bersih and Persatuan Promosi Hak Asasi Malaysia (Proham) and Suara Rakyat Malaysia (Suaram) still regarded the NSC Bill as unconstitutional and ought to be discarded for being a grave abuse of power.

Najib, as the NSC chairman, reportedly said the council was looking into national security matters following the Jakarta attacks.

After chairing an NSC meeting yesterday, he said joint police and military patrols would be placed at strategic locations, including Bukit Bintang and major shopping malls.

He said the presence of the joint patrols would reassure the people that the country’s security was under control and should not be misinterpreted as an emergency declaration. – January 20, 2016.

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