

Malaysia: IPCMC bill weak, needs more consultation, NGO says

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PETALING JAYA: An NGO has called for further consultation by the government on the bill for the Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) tabled in Parliament last month, saying the proposed law as it stands is weak.

Citizens Against Enforced Disappearance (CAGED) said the functions of the commission had been watered down from the original bill drafted in a royal commission of inquiry report in 2005.

"It gives IPCMC less investigative power than the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission currently has," CAGED spokesman Rama Ramanathan told FMT.

"This is especially in the area of search and seizure," he said, noting also a diminished capacity to hold public hearings.

He added that the draft bill in 2005 had allowed the commission more authority, including the power to divulge information held under the Official Secrets Act and to issue search warrants during investigations.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Liew Vui Keong recently said he would consider amending certain clauses in the IPCMC bill following engagement with members of civil society.

The suggestions raised at the meeting included the transfer of certain powers from the prime minister to the commission.

The meeting was attended by the Bar Council, the Society for the Promotion of Human Rights Malaysia and other relevant civil society organisations.

However, Rama claimed that attendees who had campaigned for the commission for years had disagreed that all stakeholders were consulted during the drafting of the bill.

He said a preliminary report on the proposal, also known as a Green Paper, should have been produced at the meeting to enable more detailed discussion on which model would be best for the commission.

"CAGED believes it is not too late for the government to produce a Green Paper because the objective is to find the right solution to the problem, not bulldoze the bill through," he added.

He nonetheless welcomed Liew's efforts to engage with civil society, saying the minister means well and had done a good job chairing the meeting.

Ainaa Aiman

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