

PRESS STATEMENT

A Weak Prime Minister Commissioned Crackdown

Let's fight this Repression !

Monday 10 December 2007, by [ARUTCHELVAN S., PSM \(Malaysia\)](#) (Date first published: 10 December 2007).

Today is International Human Rights Day but the Prime Minister of Malaysia has commissioned yet another crackdown on public assemblies, against political activist, against activist lawyers and against organisers of peaceful assemblies. A proposed handing over of memorandum to the Parliament tomorrow is now marred with a restraining order.

The PM has warned that public safety is top priority but recent events would indicate that the unpopular PM is resorting to unpopular measures to create forced consent for the people to accept his rule of the game or face the punishment. Unlike what many think, it is normal for weak and insecure Prime Ministers' to resort to desperate attempts to clinch to power.

The PM is going on the offensive as he has failed to address immediate issues raised by the people and is trying to rule the nation using fear and intimidation. Gani Patail – the Attorney General himself, have been working hard in the last few days to ensure those detained by the police are denied bail. This is back-door ISA – detention without trial where offences which can be granted bail is now taking hours to conclude if bail can be granted or not.

Till now 31 members who participated in a 'Hindraf' gathering on 25th. November and another two who were shot by the police in the Batu Buruk incident in Kuala Terengganu were both charged with attempted murder and denied bail. The charges are ridiculous at any standard.

Today, eight people, including five lawyers were charged with participating in an illegal assembly. They also faced a further charge of disobeying the police order to disperse. Another activist lawyer- Edmund Bon, was charged with obstructing Kuala Lumpur City Hall officers from performing their duties. He was also charged under section 186 of the Penal Code. Another seventeen people, including opposition leaders Tian Chua and Mohamad Sabu were also today charged with illegal assembly in connection with the Nov 10 mass rally organised by Bersih.

In all the cases, AG himself submitted that they should not be given bail on grounds that he believed that they would repeat the offence and alleged that some of them were "notorious". He also felt that only by denying them bail can they defer them from participating in further public assemblies. In both courts, though Gani was ruthless in his argument to deny bail, yet a huge turnout of people and continues outpour of defiance finally won the day when the courts allowed for bail.

The pathetic performance and reasoning by the AG and the uncalled bullying and intimidation by the Inspector General Of Police, and the continues fear echoed in the main stream media have once again created a tense atmosphere. The air is no longer calm and we have warned on previous posting of ours, that the ruling party will use the current situation to create further racial tensions in order to divide the fragile unity which exist among the races.

Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) calls upon the people to march on and rise against the oppression and exploitation by the ruling party. We also call upon all progressive forces in all the parties and civil society movement to take the struggle forward using a class approach against the narrow race and religious politics advocated by UMNO and its coalition partners. The ruling party would once again use all tactics to divide the working class of Malaysia of all walks, race and religion. We have to be cautious and wary of these tactics and elevate above race and religious sentiments to fight for justice, equality and freedom.

Under this guise of tensions and crackdown, the Government is making us forget the scandals and among them, VK Lingam tape, the Altantuya murder, the raising cost of living, privatization of health, the failure to give workers minimum wage and many others. It is time for us to bring back these issues to the main agenda, consolidate the opposition and fight this repression.

Released by

S.Arutchelvan

Secretary general