



## CATHOLIC LAWYERS' SOCIETY, KUALA LUMPUR

### **PRESS STATEMENT- REPEAL OF ISA IS TIMELY**

The Catholic Lawyers Society Kuala Lumpur applauds the Prime Minister on his move to repeal the Internal Security Act (ISA). The move is in the right direction. In the past the use of the ISA has been abused especially to silence dissent. Operation Lalang in 1988 is one such example of the abusive use of the ISA. It is time that the Government did away with such a draconian law and uphold the constitutional rights of its people, namely freedom of speech and expression, to assemble peacefully and the right to form associations (Article 10 and 14 Federal Constitution). However if the ISA is to be replaced with two new laws as suggested by the Prime Minister, it is hoped that these two new laws are not a 'change of name' for the ISA, which would then render any repeal of the ISA redundant.

The Catholic Lawyers' Society welcomes the proposed amendments to the Printing & Publication Act. Publications and newspapers in the past had to live in 'fear' that their annual license would not be renewed. With the advent of the internet, information and news are available at one's finger tips at a click of the button. Any attempt to restrict news and information is now a thing of the past. The government cannot use outdated laws to control the dissemination of information.

We would now call on the government to make good of its intentions immediately. Any delay will only cast doubts on what would otherwise be a genuine attempt by the Prime Minister to bring about reforms and changes for the good of the people.

We hope the Government's efforts are not just limited to the repeal of the ISA and amendments to the Printing and Publication Act, or the repeal of the Banishment Act. There are many other laws such as the Police Act and University Colleges Act that curtails peaceful assembly. These statutes have to be reviewed and amended or even repealed.

We call on the government to continue to review all laws that attempts to restrict the basic rights of the people as enshrined in the Federal Constitution.

Joy Appukuttan  
Catholic Lawyers Society, Kuala Lumpur  
President  
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