

Ops Lalang - Shedding more light

Written by straits-mongrel

Wednesday, 27 October 2010 04:51 - Last Updated Wednesday, 27 October 2010 20:15



October 27, 1987: Earlier, a pen had scratched on sheets of paper - a signature repeated 106 times on separate forms authorising the detention without trial of politicians, community and civil

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society leaders. Those who lived through that day 23 years ago remember the chill factor that immediately blanketed society. Subzero submission. The subsequent White Paper explained that it was necessary because "the various groups, who had played up 'sensitive issues' and thus created 'racial tension' in the country, had exploited the government's 'liberal' and 'tolerant' attitude".

According to official documents and the mass media, the ISA was used that day to quell surging racial tensions that had resulted from the government's appointment of about 100 non-Mandarin educated leaders to senior positions in Chinese vernacular schools. You can read Wikipedia's brief account of the saga [here](#) . It was a blatant disregard to the promise that the ISA, when finally passed in Parliament in 1960, would never be used to suppress political and social discourse.

Many of the detainees are still alive today including DAP's Karpal Singh and Lim Kit Siang, and then-UMNO MP Ibrahim Ali. They remain steadfast on their respective positions. They have their side to tell.

Tonight at the KL-Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall, Ops Lalang detainee [Dr Kua Kia Soong will share his perspectives](#) on the dark event together with Hishamuddin Rais (ex-ISA detainee) and Teo Soh Lung ([Ops Spectrum](#) , Singapore, detainee). The forum coincides with the book launch of Dr Kua's book, 445 Days Under The ISA - Operation Lalang, 1987-1989.

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Meanwhile, over in the UK...

Abolish ISA-UK: Operasi Lalang Anniversary Protest Walk & Wayang Kulit Against the ISA

The 27th of Oct 2010 will mark the 23rd anniversary of Operasi Lalang, a particularly dark time in Malaysian history, when over 100 civil society activists, opposition leaders, academics, religious converts and ordinary civilians were arrested and detained under the ISA in a government crackdown on civil liberties and human rights, derogatorily labeled Ops Lalang.

In view of the fact that the Malaysian government appears no closer to repealing this unjust law, the Abolish ISA Movement UK are organising an ISA Protest Walk & Wayang Kulit on Saturday the 30th of Oct to draw attention and highlight to the international community the injustices that continue to be perpetrated using the ISA.

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We will start at the Malaysian High Commission in Belgrave Square at 4pm, aiming to start protesting from 4.15- 4.45pm (Nearest Tube: Hyde Park Corner). Trafalgar Sq where we will protest for a further 30 mins, before the Wayang Kulit show at dusk, ending at 7pm. We will then have a silent, peaceful walk through Green Park, past Constitution Hill and Admiralty Arch, ending at 7p.m.

This is an important time to scale up the international campaign and solidarity work with Gerakan Mansuhkan ISA in Malaysia, given that no further progress has been made by the Malaysian government despite the recommendations of the recent UN Working Group on Arbitrary detention that the ISA should be repealed with immediate effect and a number of promises since April 2009 to 'review' the ISA.

In particular, the Malaysian government seems intent on revamping its international image, with no regard to rectifying and improving its dismal human rights record. We will be showing solidarity with Zunar, the Malaysian cartoonist, famous for his sharp political satire who was recently arrested in a government clampdown in KL, by carrying some of his ISA-inspired cartoons as posters at the protest.

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Our symbolic walk past Constitution Hill will be led by two time ISA-detainee, Raja Petra Kamarudin and his outspoken and courageous wife Marina, who has been an inspirational figure in the campaign to release all ISA detainees and abolish the ISA. Marina will also speak briefly about her personal experience as a wife of a former detainee and the devastating impact the ISA has on the spouses, families and friends of those detained.

We look forward to seeing you there. For further information and to find out more about GMI-UK's solidarity work, please email abolish.isa.uk@gmail.com