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For immediate release

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Prime Minister Najib Razak should keep to his promises to abolish the Sedition Act

Gerakan Hapus Akta Hasutan (GHAH) is deeply disturbed and outraged with Prime Minister Najib Razak's cowardly decision to renege on his promise to abolish the Sedition Act and to 'fortify and strengthen' the Act instead.

The shocking increase in sedition charges and investigations in the past two years reaffirms the Prime Minister's false reformist credentials and it is evident that his Administration is still reliant on the draconian and antiquated legislation to control and suppress democratic norms and legitimate dissent.

The Prime Minister must be reminded he had repeatedly promised to abolish the Sedition Act and he must be held accountable for his promises made to the Malaysian people.

The sudden decision to retain the Sedition Act to allegedly protect the sanctity of Islam and other religions and to address those calling for the secession of Sabah and Sarawak reeks of malice and bad faith, as the Act has been rampantly abused to charge politicians, activists and dissidents. This decision tightens the noose around freedom of speech and expression and makes clear what a bleak and undemocratic future we have under Najib's Administration.

GHAH therefore calls on the Prime Minister to respect democratic norms, the rule of law and to be accountable to the Malaysian people for promises made to abolish the Sedition Act. There is no room for the Sedition Act in a democratic and modern Malaysia.

GHAH reiterates our demands that the Sedition Act must be abolished, all existing charges under the Act to be dropped and to release all those incarcerated under the Act and lastly, there shall be no replacement act with similar draconian provisions.

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