



GERAKAN HAPUS AKTA HASUTAN (GHAH)

433A, Jalan 5/46, Gasing Indah, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

Tel : 603 - 7784 3525

Fax : 603 - 7784 3526

Email : gerakanhah@gmail.com

Facebook : facebook.com/hapushasutan

For immediate release
23 November 2014

GHAH URGES SPEAKER AND ALL PARLIAMENTARIANS TO SUPPORT PEOPLE'S PETITIONS FOR ABOLITION OF SEDITION ACT

Gerakan Hapus Akta Hasutan (GHAH) calls on all parliamentarians to respond to the 3005 people's petitions and to repeal the draconian Sedition Act 1948 immediately.

The 3005 petitions from the rakyat were submitted by GHAH to the Speaker of the Lower House, Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia through member of parliament for Shah Alam, YB Khalid Samad on 20 November 2014.

YB Khalid Samad will move the motion tomorrow in parliament to respond to the demands of the people's petitions, namely to abolish the archaic Sedition Act, to drop charges of those prosecuted and release all those detained under Sedition Act, and to refrain from replacing the Sedition Act with similar laws.

The Parliament must remember that the Sedition Act 1948 was introduced by the British when they colonised Malaya to oppress our forefathers who dissent to the authoritative colonial law and fought for the independence of Malaya. It is an irony that this archaic piece of legislation remains with us even after 57 years of independence.

Article 10(1)(a) of the Federal Constitution provides that every citizen has the right to freedom of speech and expression. The Sedition Act is too broadly framed as it defines "seditious tendency" as to bring into hatred or contempt or disaffection against the ruler or the government or the administration of justice, among others.

Over the past 3 months, the Sedition Act has been clearly and selectively used against more than 40 individuals, who exercised their constitutional rights to freedom of expression under Article 10 of the Federal Constitution, to comment on legitimate political issues and concerns in the country. These included elected representatives, lawyers, journalist, academic, students, religion leaders, activist and so on.

Criminalisation of citizens who exercise their constitutional rights to freedom of expression is endangering the values we cherish in a democratic society. Any dissents or dissatisfactions should be responded through healthy debate and open discussion. Further, any government that has a sincere desire for progress and reform should appreciate the benefit of objective criticism. A responsible government must not suppress the expression of any individual who criticizes the establishment.

The Britain, whom gave birth to the law in the 12th century, has in 2010 abolished its Sedition Act. Clearly, the Sedition Act has outlived its purpose and went against democratic values in our modern society. GHAAH urges all parliamentarians and the government to follow the footsteps of the Britain in abolishing the outdated and archaic law.

We urge the members of Parliament, as the representative of the people, to restore our democratic space, and to repeal the Sedition Act immediately with no replacement Act of similar draconian provision.

For inquiry, please contact:

Mr. Yap Swee Seng, executive director of Suaram at +6012 2015272 or detention@suaram.net

Mr. Eric Paulsen, executive director of Lawyers for Liberty at +60 12 7162972 or ericpaulsen101@gmail.com

Mr. Liao Kok Fah, chairperson of Civil Rights Committee of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall at +60 16 2265330 or liaukokfah@gmail.com

About Gerakan Hapus Akta Hasutan (GHAAH)

GHAAH is a movement supported by 133 civil societies in Malaysia spearheaded by SUARAM, Lawyers for Liberty, IKRAM, among others. The objective of GHAAH is to carry out a national campaign to bring to an end to the ever present threat against freedom of expression and opinion by the Sedition Act 1948 that hangs over every Malaysian.