

URGENT ACTION

INVESTIGATIONS INTO HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER CLOSED

The Malaysian police have officially closed all investigations into Maria Chin Abdullah, who was detained under security laws for organizing a rally on free and fair elections. Placed in solitary confinement for ten days in November 2016, she was released on 28 November 2016 and she has continued with her human rights work. She is grateful for all the support and no further action is needed.

Maria Chin Abdullah was informed by the Malaysian Police Headquarters on 21 November 2017 that her case has been closed. The police have returned all items they seized during the raid on the Bersih 2.0 office in Petaling Jaya, Selangor that took place on 18 November 2016. Amongst other things, the police confiscated 10 laptops, payroll, bank statements and mobile phones on the day of the raid.

Maria Chin Abdullah was arrested on 18 November 2016 for ‘attempts to commit activities detrimental to Parliamentary democracy’, under Section 124C of the Penal Code. She was then detained under the Security Offences and Special Measures Act 2012 (SOSMA), which allows for individuals to be held up to 28 days without charge or access to the courts. In addition to being held for ten days in solitary confinement, Maria Chin Abdullah was denied access to her family and lawyers for the first two days of detention and was subjected to prolonged hours of questioning. Following her release ten days later, she received several death threats.

While the Security Offences and Special Measures Act 2012 (SOSMA) specifically states that no individual will be arrested for ‘political activity’ or ‘belief’ and its use must be restricted to matters pertaining to public order and national security, Maria Chin Abdullah was arrested for organizing a rally for free and fair elections. It is our concern that this legislation has been widely drafted, vaguely worded and open to abuse. Amnesty International believes that Maria Chin’s detention under security laws was part of a concerted, politically motivated attempt to intimidate and silence peaceful activists and government critics.

Maria Chin Abdullah wanted to share the following message with the movement: “I would also really like to thank Amnesty very much for all the letters you have written to the Malaysian government, for taking action and for highlighting my case. We are thinking of our next steps. We are far from what we want in achieving human rights and democracy in Malaysia but we will have to continue our work.”

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

This is the second update of UA 263/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/asa28/5240/2016/en/>

Name: Maria Chin Abdullah
Gender m/f: f

Further information on UA: 263/16 Index: ASA 28/7500/2017 Issue Date: 24 November 2017

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