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## **Malaysia: Renewed use of draconian law to silence critics**

*Once again the Malaysian government has invoked the draconian Internal Security Act (ISA) to silence peaceful opposition, Amnesty International said calling for the immediate release of at least seven activists arrested today.*

*The activists, leading members of the opposition Parti Keadilan Nasional (National Justice Party), are being held incommunicado at Bukit Aman police headquarters, Kuala Lumpur where they are at risk of torture or ill-treatment.*

*Former detainees have testified that they were forced to strip, physically assaulted, subjected to sleep deprivation and prolonged aggressive interrogation to coerce confessions, and threatened with indefinite detention.*

*"Time and time again, the Malaysian government has used the ISA to crush alleged political threats," the organization said. "This legislation is a crude and outdated tool of political repression."*

*Amnesty International members around the world are writing to the Malaysian government urging it to immediately release the activists, to ensure they will not be subjected to torture or ill-treatment, and that they be allowed immediate access to lawyers, families and medical attention.*

*The organization is also reiterating its call for reform of the ISA, which allows for detention without charge or trial for periods of two years, renewable indefinitely. The ISA is from the British colonial period*

*and allows for the use of preventive detention in situations of "acute national emergency".*

*"The ISA is nothing more than a hangover from the colonial era which has no place on the statute book of a modern democracy."*

*Amnesty International welcomed today's calls by the Malaysian Human Rights Commission for the release of the activists.*

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW web : <http://www.amnesty.org>