

NST 28/05/09 m/s2

Govt acts firmly on Chin Peng, Mas Selamat

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PUTRAJAYA: A terrorist of old, Chin Peng, will never set foot again on Malaysian soil. A modern-day terrorist, Mas Selamat Kastari, will also not be given the chance to wreak havoc on the country.

The government yesterday took an action on two fronts — shutting the door on the return of former Communist Party of Malaya secretary-general Chin Peng; and, detaining suspected leader of the Jemaah Islamiah militant group Mas Selamat under the Internal Security Act for two years.

Asked for the reason for not allowing Chin Peng back, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said: "Because this will only open old wounds and create dissatisfaction among families and next of kin of those who died during the Emergency."

As for Mas Selamat's detention under the ISA, Najib said: "He is a threat to national security."

Chin Peng failed in his last legal bid to live in Malaysia after the Federal Court on April 30 upheld decisions by two lower courts compelling him to produce his identification documents before he is allowed to enter the country.

Despite that, he made appeals, sparking a debate. Penang Gerakan chairman Datuk Dr Teng Hock Nan was among those who wanted permission to be given to Chin Peng to return.

However, many who fought deadly battles with communists during the Emergency after World War 2 and family members of



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak says allowing Chin Peng to return will create dissatisfaction among families and next of kin of those who died during the Emergency. — Bernama picture

those killed in terrorist acts were aghast at the "sympathy" being expressed for Chin Peng and the glossing over of atrocities by his followers.

Chin Peng now lives in Bangkok.

Mas Selamat is the alleged mastermind of a plot to hijack a plane

and crash it into Singapore's Changi Airport.

He fled the island republic in 2001 but was captured by Indonesian police on Bintan island in 2006 and repatriated to Singapore.

He, however, escaped from the

Whitley Road detention centre on Feb 27 last year and was captured by Malaysian police in Johor on April 1.

Najib said it was the Malaysian government's decision to detain Mas Selamat.

"For the time being, he is detained here because we need to know more information (from him)," he said, when asked whether Mas Selamat would be handed over to the Singapore authorities.

"I am sure if he goes to Singapore, he will be detained as well. I can't see Singapore releasing him, can you? He is a threat to national security.

"That was why he was put under arrest here and Singapore feels the same way, too. Either way, he is a threat to Singapore as well as to Malaysia."

Najib added that the authorities in both countries were in close contact with one another.

"Singapore expects us to detain him and similarly, if he is in Singapore, he will be detained, too," Najib said when announcing the appointment of former minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Amirsham Abdul Aziz as the chairman of the new Economic Advisory Council.

Bernama reported that another suspected JI member, Abdul Matin, would also be detained under the ISA for two years.

The report also said Johar Hassan, who rented out his house in Kampung Tawakal, Skudai, to Mas Selamat, had been placed under restricted ordinance.