

October 27, 1987: Earlier, a pen had scratched on sheets of paper - a signature repeated 106 times on separate forms authorising the detention without trial of politicians, community and civil

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society leaders. Those who lived through that day 23 years ago remember the chill factor that immediately blanketed society. Subzero submission. The subsequent White Paper explained that it was necessary because "the various groups, who had played up 'sensitive issues' and thus created 'racial tension' in the country, had exploited the government's 'liberal' and 'tolerant' attitude".

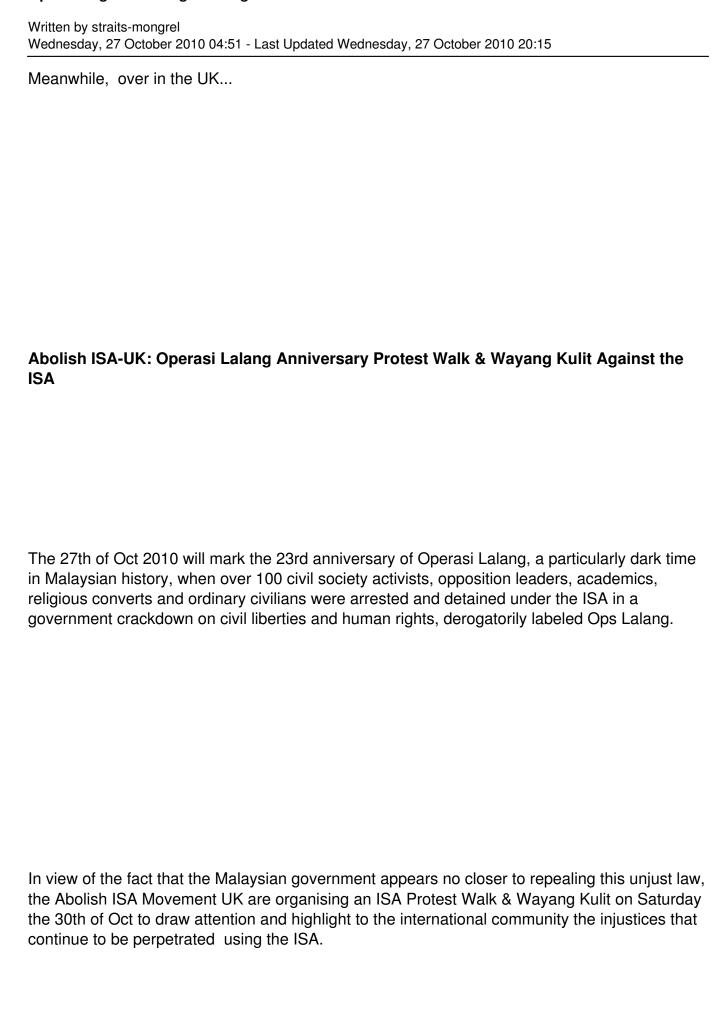
According to official documents and the mass media, the ISA was used that day to quell surging racial tensions that had resulted from the government's appointment of about 100 non-Mandarin educated leaders to senior positions in Chinese vernacular schools. You can read Wikipedia's brief account of the saga here. It was a blatant disregard to the promise that the ISA, when finally passed in Parliament in 1960, would never be used to suppress political and social discourse.

Many of the detainees are still alive today including DAP's Karpal Singh and Lim Kit Siang, and then-UMNO MP Ibrahim Ali. They remain steadfast on their respective positions. They have their side to tell.

Tonight at the KL-Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall, Ops Lalang detainee <u>Dr Kua Kia Soong</u> will share his perspectives

on the dark event together with Hishamuddin Rais (ex-ISA detainee) and Teo Soh Lung (Ops Spectrum

, Singapore, detainee). The forum coincides with the book launch of Dr Kua's book, 445 Days Under The ISA - Operation Lalang, 1987-1989.



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We will start at the Malaysian High Commission in Belgrave Square at 4pm, aiming to start protesting from 4.15- 4.45pm (Nearest Tube: Hyde Park Corner). Trafalgar Sq where we will protest for a further 30 mins, before the Wayang Kulit show at dusk, ending at 7pm. We will then have a silent, peaceful walk through Green Park, past Constitution Hill and Admiralty Arch, ending at 7p.m.

This is an important time to scale up the international campaign and solidarity work with Gerakan Mansuhkan ISA in Malaysia, given that no further progress has been made by the Malaysian government despite the recommendations of the recent UN Working Group on Arbitrary detention that the ISA should be repealed with immediate effect and a number of promises since April 2009 to 'review' the ISA.

In particular, the Malaysian government seems intent on revamping its international image, with no regard to rectifying and improving its dismal human rights record. We will be showing solidarity with Zunar, the Malaysian cartoonist, famous for his sharp political satire who was recently arrested in a government clampdown in KL, by carrying some of his ISA-inspired cartoons as posters at the protest.

