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CALS Meeting Room, Block B, NUS (BTC)

Sedition Prosecutions and Malaysian Constitutionalism

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ABSTRACT

The news that Karpal Singh, affectionately known as the ‘Tiger of Jelutong’, had been killed in a car accident came as a shock for the Malaysian community. His tragic demise came in the wake of his recent conviction by the Malaysian courts of the offence of sedition. The prosecution was launched after he had expressed the view that the action of Sultan Azlan Shah of the State of Perak could be questioned in a court of law. Karpal Singh is one of many prominent critics of the government who have been subjected to this archaic law.

Phil Robertson, the deputy Asia director of Human Rights Watch said ‘Prosecutions under the draconian Sedition Act are on the increase when they should be relegated to history.’ How is it that an archaic law which has virtually become obsolete and indeed jettisoned by a number of democratic countries taken on a new lease of life in Malaysia?

This paper examines the facts of the *Karpal Singh Case* against the backdrop of the current sedition law in Malaysia and then explores the use and abuse of such law in Malaysia.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Professor Hoong Phun (“HP”) Lee holds the Sir John Latham Chair of Law at Monash University. His principal fields of interest are Australian constitutional law, constitutional law of Malaysia and Singapore, administrative law, national security law and the Australian Judiciary. Professor Lee is the author of *Constitutional Conflicts in Contemporary Malaysia* (Oxford University Press, 1995) and co-author of *The Australian Judiciary* (2nd ed, Cambridge University Press, 2013). His many books include *Judiciaries in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2011) and, as co-editor with Professor Andrew Harding, *Constitutional Landmarks in Malaysia – The First 50 Years 1957-2007* (LexisNexis, 2007).

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