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Tajuk : Amendments Targetted At Criminals.

# Amendments targetted at criminals

Wan Junaidi: Under current law, underworld leaders cannot be arrested without evidence

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**KUCHING:** Deputy Home Minister Datuk Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar has clarified that the proposed amendments to the Prevention of Crime Act (PCA) are not targeting the masses, but criminals.

He said the Government's intention was to protect the public at large from falling victims to serious crimes currently on

the rise.

"The amendments are not for the purpose of popularity, but for the purpose of defending the freedom and security of the masses.

"While the Government acknowledges that the right of individuals is important, the right and security of the masses is even more important," he said at the launch of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) Undergraduates Civil Defence Corp here yesterday.

Wan Junaidi said now it was very difficult to arrest and charge the ring leaders of syndicates behind serious crimes like killing, robbery, gambling, extortion, smuggling and kidnapping because there was no such law.

He believed there were many illegal gambling syndicates in Sarawak, or Samarahan for that matter, but the police could not arrest the leaders because they did not have the evidence.

"The police may have arrested the workers, but that will not solve the problem because the gang leaders are still free out there.

"The proposed amendments are to keep members of unlawful societies such as gangs and triad in check."

Among the proposals under the PCA is to detain hardcore criminals for up to two years without trial. Similar to the old ISA, the proposed amendments exclude the provision

of judicial review, except if it is on procedural measures.

A Prevention of Crime Board will also be set up where reports on the detainees are to be made to the board instead of the minister.

It was reported that the bill is expected to be passed without difficulties as only a simple majority is needed and the ruling coalition presently holds 133 parliamentary seats out of the total 222.