

Oz Senator Nick Xenophon in custody in Malaysia over unofficial visit with anti-government elements

by David Penberthy and Brad Crouch via sal - Adelaide Now Friday, Feb 15 2013, 9:44pm
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Inept Oz politicians running errands for Washington can always be relied upon to blow it one way or another. This latest embarrassing situation has exposed attempts by lackey Oz politicians to interfere in Malaysia's impending elections. Please read the following comically biased media report from CFR Murdoch sources to appreciate the planned interference. One can only wonder which nation represents the 'democracy' constantly referred to in the story -- perhaps it is the 'democratic' totalitarian, indefinite detention, kill list, police state U.S. model we should all emulate and impose on other nations!



Senator Nick Xenophon

AUSTRALIAN politicians have called off a visit to Malaysia after Independent Senator Nick Xenophon was refused entry and detained pending deportation.

The group, comprising South Australian Senator Xenophon, Liberal MP Mal Washer, Nationals Senator John Williams and ALP MP Steve Georganas, were planning an unofficial visit to Kuala Lumpur ahead of Malaysia's upcoming elections.

They were to meet opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, as well as Malaysia's minister in charge of parliamentary affairs Mohammed Nazri and members of the group Bersih, the Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections.

Senator Xenophon, who arrived ahead of the others, proceeded no further than the immigration line.

He is being held in an interrogation room at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport, which has a series of adjoining cells holding female prisoners.

He has been told he is not allowed to make telephone calls and is not even allowed to go to the bathroom without a police guard.

Senator Xenophon managed to make a call to The Sunday Mail when he was left unattended in the interrogation room.

"I am effectively a prisoner here," Senator Xenophon said. "I'm being held in an area with all these holding cells which are full of women. They have basically told me I am an enemy of the state. They are trying to get me on the next plane out of here and back home."

Senator Xenophon used his contacts to get a text message to the Australian High Commission in KL.

Foreign Minister Bob Carr said High Commissioner Miles Kupa was with Senator Xenophon now, seeking his immediate release.

"Preliminary reports suggest the detention is under Malaysia's national security laws. Our High Commissioner, Miles Kupa has now made direct contact with Senator Xenophon at the airport and is seeking his release.

"Mr Kupa is also urgently pursuing an explanation from Malaysian authorities regarding the reasons for this detention.

"Australia's concerns have been raised with Malaysia's Foreign Minister, the Minister for Home Affairs and the Malaysian High Commissioner to Australia. Their support is requested in securing Senator Xenophon's swift release from custody.

"Senator Xenophon's detention is a surprising and disappointing act from a country with which Australia routinely maintains strong diplomatic relations."

After he landed this morning the anti-pokies Senator joined the customs queue but was told there were "irregularities" with his passport.

He was then taken away by the immigration officials to the guarded area where he was told that the Malaysian authorities knew of his stance on human rights in Malaysia and his itinerary for this week.

Senator Xenophon was scheduled to meet with pro-democracy and Opposition MPs - yet oddly he had also been granted a meeting with a senior Government MP, the Special Minister of State.

"I was even meeting members of the Government, I mean, the whole situation is ridiculous, we are meant to be the closest of friends with Malaysia," he said.

"We are meant to be having a people swap deal on asylum seekers but so far it looks like the only person being swapped is me."

Senator Xenophon believes that a recent article he wrote for Fairfax newspapers in January, which was critical of human rights in Malaysia, may have emboldened the authorities to deny him entry.

Last year he was also unwittingly caught up in a 25,000-strong democracy protest in KL where he was tear-gassed.

Senator Williams said the delegation, planned two months ago, would not now proceed.

"I have just spoken to Mal Washer and told him that I'd be pulling out. I have spoken to (deputy opposition leader) Julie Bishop and I sent Nick Xenophon a text message saying we'd be pulling out of the trip and he just replied OK," he told ABC television.

Senator Williams said he thought it better now to let the dust settle and visit later in the year.

He said Senator Xenophon had visited Malaysia on other occasions and wanted a bipartisan Australian delegation to conduct a low profile visit, meeting MPs and members of the election commission.

"Nick Xenophon asked me and I have a lot of respect for Nick. We are pretty good mates. When he has a problem, you'd expect that the problem would be genuine," he said.

"Nick said there's some problem over there. He'd like us to go over and visit."

Senator Williams said he did not believe a protest by Australia would help.

"I don't think pouring petrol on a fire would help anything. Obviously we need to build some relationships there as far as Senator Xenophon goes, but I don't think it's a big issue," he said.

"They have their reasons why they stopped him at the airport and I'm sure in time these can be talked through."

"It will settle down in a few weeks time and we'll look at whether we can make a visit then."

Associate Professor Clinton Fernandes of the International and Political Studies Program at the University of NSW said the Malaysian Government was worried about Senator Xenophon because he "provides the public with an international voice about problems with the electoral system."

Senator Xenophon and Dr Fernandes were part of a 2012 International Fact-Finding Mission on Elections in Malaysia, whose report was critical of the Government and which called for electoral reform.

"Senator Xenophon and a delegation of Australian parliamentarians were going to Malaysia to meet with politicians, the Malaysian Bar Council and the Electoral Commission to discuss electoral reform outlined in that report," he said.

"There is no doubt the reason he is being deported is because the report was critical of the electoral system - for example it showed a leading government figure has an electorate with just 7000 voters while the Deputy Opposition Leader has an electorate with 100,000 constituents.

"There is a class of people who have never lost power since Malaysia was formed and they are now worried as the youthful population is calling for democratic changes and they don't know what to do about it.

"There has been no violence so the government can't call them terrorists and crack down on them, there have been no agent provocateurs to provide a trigger for an armed crackdown. Senator Xenophon's presence provides them with an international voice about problems with the electoral system, so they want him out."

Dr Fernandes said Senator Xenophon was not at risk of harm from Malaysian authorities but said they wanted him out of the country to avoid a focus for discontent, as elections must be held by June.

He noted Senator Xenophon has annoyed the Government by giving copies of the Fact Finding Mission on Election in Malaysia to every diplomatic mission base in Canberra to ensure the wider

international community was aware of electoral issues in the nation.

The fact finding mission was conducted by international observer group with representatives from India, Pakistan, Germany, Indonesia, the Philippines as well as Senator Xenophon and Dr Fernandes.

Senator Xenophon visited the nation in April last year when he was teargassed by riot police breaking up a mass peaceful demonstration in Kuala Lumpur demanding democratic reforms.

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