

Wed, Sept 2 2009 - PUTRAJAYA: The Home Ministry will consider setting up an Internal Security Council to approve detentions under the Internal Security Act.

This will limit the power of the minister to direct a person to be detained for up to two years.

Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said this would increase the checks and balances when a person is detained under the ISA.

Setting up the council was one of the proposals by Pertubuhan Pribumi Perkasa Malaysia (Perkasa) in a memorandum handed to Hishammuddin yesterday.

The minister said changing the initial detention period of 60 days would be considered in a review of the ISA that will look at amendments to be tabled in the next parliamentary session.

"We have to see how long we can give a detainee before he can be charged in court," he said, bearing in mind that some people were a very real threat to national security.

Hishammuddin said he hoped that the first reading could commence at next month's parliamentary sitting. The basic framework has been seen by Information, Communications, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Rais Yatim and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz.

Hishammuddin said it was quicker to review the act than to abolish it and create a new one to replace it.

The ministry will also be taking in suggestions from other organisations, such as the Bar Council and Amnesty International, he added.

The home minister commended Perkasa for calmly handing over the memorandum, rather than taking to the streets.

"I have no problem exchanging information and ideas with anyone if they approach me and engage with the ministry," he said with clear reference to the massive anti-ISA rally held early last month.

Perkasa president Datuk Ibrahim Ali also suggested amending the preamble of ISA to enlarge its scope and function, adding the right to detain individuals accused of corruption involving large sums of money.