

One-time ISA detainee calls for changes

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Businessman Ho Kwon Ping has called for limits to Singapore's Internal Security Act (ISA), under which anyone can be detained without trial if deemed to pose a threat to national security.

He also called for the phasing out of caning and capital punishment, and the introduction of national service for new male citizens and Singapore women, The Straits Times online reported.

In a lecture on security and sustainability yesterday, he said Singapore must evolve to keep up with changing social values. He also suggested gradually liberalising old policies.

A former journalist, Mr Ho was detained under the ISA in 1977 for writing articles with a pro-Communist slant.

But yesterday, he did not call for the Act's abolishment. Instead, he suggested cutting the initial detention period from two years to one and doing more rigorous checks and balances for the subsequent detention periods.

"What must not change is the awareness that whoever surrenders too much extraordinary powers to any government, does so at his own peril," he said.