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Fadzil-Demonstration

OUTSIDERS MAY HAVE CAUSED TROUBLE DURING DEMO- PAS CHIEF

ALOR SETAR, April 8 (Bernama) -- PAS President Fadzil Noor said today outsiders may have caused trouble to trap PAS during the demonstration staged by some members of the party and students outside the entrance to the Universiti Malaya on Friday.

"Elements could have infiltrated, sabotaged the demonstration and created trouble and disorder," he told reporters at his house here.

Fadzil said the gathering organised by the Dewan Pemuda Pas Pusat was to have been peaceful to highlight the party's objection to the presence of the Israeli cricket team in Malaysia.

He did not believe the university students and PAS members involved in the demonstration could have opted for violence.

"I believe certain elements had deliberately caused an unhealthy situation between the demonstrators and the police," he added.

Some 1,500 people took part in the demonstration which began at 2pm after the Friday prayers at the Masjid Ar Rahman, Universiti Malaya and some of the demonstrators carried placards and banners and shouted anti-Israel slogans.

Federal Reserve Unit anti-riot police dispersed the crowd by firing tear gas and directing water cannon at them. In a follow-up action police arrested 250 university students and several PAS members including PAS Youth Movement Secretary Mahfuz Omar.

Fadzil said the PAS Central Executive Committee had never discussed any plans to hold the demonstration but it was organised by the PAS Youth Movement.

Asked whether the PAS Youth should have cleared the demonstration plan with the PAS Central Executive Committee, he said it depended on the issue and if it involved important policy matters.

"If it is an ordinary issue, PAS Youth can go ahead," he said.

He said the party's central executive committee did not object to PAS Youth sending a memorandum to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as such action was a normal matter to express a view point.

"Through the memorandum, the Prime Minister can read and understand the feelings of Muslims over the presence of the Israeli cricket team in Malaysia particularly when Israel was involved in the killing of Muslim Palestinians and seizing of their property," he said.

"Under such circumstances, Malaysia has allowed the Israeli cricket team to play here and enjoy ...this definitely has hurt the feelings of concerned Muslims," he said.

Fadzil said PAS could not accept the government's explanation for allowing the Israeli team to play here --- to show that Malaysian Muslims were progressive and tolerant.

"I think the Prime Minister has a misconception about the Jews. The history of Jewish violence is not new, it is not new to the 20th century, their history is found in the Al Quran," he said.

He claimed that the government's decision showed its weakness in bowing to the wishes of the International Cricket Council which stipulated that Israel should be allowed in if Malaysia wanted to host the tournament.

He said Malaysia was vociferous overseas in opposing Israeli cruelty but acted differently at home.

Fadzil said PAS did not subscribe to the view that Malaysia's move to permit the Israeli cricket team to play here would change that country's

attitude.

On the announcement by PAS Youth head Abu Bakar Chik that the movement would mount campaigns overseas to condemn Israeli oppression, Fadzil said such plans should be discussed with the party's central executive committee beforehand.

Meanwhile in Kuala Lumpur, PAS Youth Movement Secretary Mahfuz Omar said no official charges had been pressed against party members involved in the demonstraton.

He regretted the use of water cannons and tear gas to disperse the demonstrators.

"We only opposed the presence of the Israeli cricket team and we did not prepare for any demonstration," he said.

"I ask all parties including the government to find out where their dignity had gone by allowing the Israeli cricket team into the country when Palestinian Muslims are being killed by the Jewish community," he said.

Mahfuz claimed that the PAS' move to oppose the presence of the Israeli cricket team had the support of various Muslim organisations and individuals including those from Turkey and Egypt. -- BERNAMA

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