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`Info received demo would turn violent'

reports on "Dewan Rakyat" by Ramlan Said; Ainin Mohd  
THE police's pre-emptive move to detain several organisers of the Black 14 assembly in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday was made as information received indicated that the planned demonstration would turn violent.

Deputy Home Minister Datuk Zainal Abidin Zin said in the Dewan Rakyat that police intelligence revealed that the people had been asked to bring flags, sticks and canes to the assembly.

The gathering was supposed to mark the first year of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's imprisonment.

"The planning (for the demonstration) started much earlier. At various party meetings and gatherings like in Gombak, Jekebu, Shah Alam and Jasin, the police discovered that supporters had been advised to bring weapons.

"The rakyat did not know this ... it was from the information gathered that the police realised the true intention of the demonstration, contrary to the announcements that it would be a peaceful one."

He was responding to claims by Opposition MPs that the police had acted cruelly and violated the rights of those arrested. He said the fact that no weapons were seized could be attributed to the various measures taken by the police, including setting up road blocks at entry points into the city, to prevent supporters from bringing weapons.

The MPs were debating a motion tabled earlier by Opposition leader and Pendang MP Datuk Fadzil Noor who wanted the House to adjourn its proceedings to discuss the arrest of several Parti Keadilan Nasional leaders and 46 others to facilitate investigations into the planned assembly.

Speaker Tun Mohamed Zahir Ismail allowed the motion.

Besides Fadzil, the others who spoke were Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong), Abdul Rahman Yusof (Keadilan-Kemaman) and three backbenchers, including Backbenchers Club chairman and Rompin MP Datuk Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis.

Zainal Abidin was at the end of his reply when he got involved in a heated argument with Mahfuz Omar (Pas-Pokok Sena), who wanted to know why he was arrested under the Internal Security Act during Operasi Lalang in 1987.

He accused the Deputy Minister of lying when the House was told that besides the Opposition, Umno and Government leaders had also been placed under ISA detention.

Disputing this, the Pas Youth leader claimed he was detained under the Act although he had nothing to do with events leading to the 1987 mass arrests.

Zainal Abidin said it was normal for the Opposition to accuse the Government of lying in all matters.

"When we detained Umno and Government leaders under the ISA, they say we only sent these people for holiday or to guest houses."

Unhappy with the reply, Mahfuz asked the Deputy Minister to give reasons for his past detention.

His refusal to sit down sparked a shouting match with the backbenchers, forcing Mohamed Zahir to switch off the microphones.

Earlier, Fadzil called on the Malaysian Human Rights Commission to investigate the alleged violations by the police and the immediate release of those detained in connection with the planned assembly.

He also accused Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad of spreading lies and trying to justify police action by saying that the

demonstration would turn violent.  
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