

Tian Chua released, no charge yet
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Parti Rakyat Keadilan information chief Tian Chua was released at 7.50 this evening on police bail although the magistrate's court had earlier remanded him for two days for investigations into an attempted murder charge.

He walked out of the Ampang police station at 8.15pm after documentary clearance by the police and has yet to be charged for any offence.

Speaking to reporters briefly after his release, Tian Chua expressed regret at the way police handled the situation yesterday.

He claimed he was manhandled when arrested. However, the questioning at the police station was okay, he said.

The politician reiterated that his arrest would not deter him from continuing to defend villagers and fight for the homeless.

According to Tian Chua, police recorded a statement from him last night and held an identification parade for the contractor to identify him.

The youth who was also arrested with Tian Chua yesterday is expected to be released tomorrow.

This morning, Ampang Magistrate Nurul Husna Awang granted the two-day remand period after Chua was arrested yesterday during a squatter colony demolition exercise in Kampung Berembang, Ampang.

"He was said to have driven his car and hit a fence, nearly hurting someone who was behind the fence," said Chua's lawyer Amer Hamzah outside the Ampang Magistrate court today.

The incident is said to have happened at about 11.40am.

Youth also remanded

Ampang Jaya police district chief ACP Amer Awal told reporters yesterday that the complainant, a worker for a property developer, escaped unhurt after leaping out of the way. The worker later lodged a police report against Chua, who was then arrested.

Chua is now being investigated under Section 307 of the Penal Code, which is punishable with 10 to 20 years of imprisonment if found guilty.

Along with Chua, police also obtained a similar two-day remand order on a 24-year-old resident of Kampung Berembang.

According to Amer, the youth was being investigated under Section 186 of the Penal

Code for obstructing public servant in the discharge of their duties, which is punishable with up to RM1,000 fine, up to three months jail or both.

He said the youth was also charged with Section 14 of the Minor Offences Act 1955 for 'insulting behaviour', which is punishable with up to RM100 fine.

Police diligence lacking

Amer said that the duo's overnight detention by the police should have been enough for proper police investigations if they had been 'diligent'.

Chua's other lawyer Latheefa Koya said one reason brought up by the police for the remand order was to put Chua in an identification parade to determine if he was in fact the driver of the car at the time.

"This shows that the police made the arrest prior to the investigations [...] this means the police don't know who was being referred to by the [person who lodged the report against Chua].

"The action by the police [in arresting Chua] was very biased in favour of the developer," said Latheefa, adding that the developer had an interest as to why Chua should be detained.

Chua was at Kampung Berembang to show support towards the residents there who refused to vacate the land on grounds that they were given an unfair deal by the developers and landowner.

Preposterous allegation

Meanwhile, PKR president Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail described the allegation of 'attempted murder' by the police against Tian Chua as "preposterous."

"For the police to entertain such frivolous police reports and at such great haste, points to the increasingly clear link between the developer and law enforcement agencies. This link has been highlighted regularly by those who have been working on housing rights for the poor in this country.

"I view this as an attempt to smear the good name of Tian Chua, his consistent and indisputable public reputation as an advocate for fundamental human rights and a defender of the poor, helpless, and in this case, the homeless," she said in a statement.

Azizah added that PKR intends to expedite legal proceedings against the developer and the police, on Chua's behalf, to restore his good name and reputation.

Vigil tonight

The duo's lawyers were in the process of obtaining the relevant police reports against their clients.

Some 50 supporters turned up at the Ampang Magistrate's Court today armed with posters demanding that Chua be freed.

The police, however, managed to slip Chua and the youth past the group and press photographers on the way to the courtroom.

The supporters are expected to carry on a vigil outside the Ampang Jaya district police headquarters tonight, where Chua is being held.

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