

**Council vows action against errant officers**  
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**Athi Veerangan**

The Penang Island Municipal Council (MPPP) will take necessary disciplinary action on its four officers if they were found guilty to have abused their powers during an operation in Komtar last week.

The council public relations office senior assistant director Riduan Merican assured that the municipality internal investigation team would not attempt to cover-up the findings of its probe into the incident.

He assured that the on-going council's internal investigation into the case would be thorough.

"We will take the appropriate internal action on the officers if they were found guilty of any misconduct," he told malaysiakini at his office today.

In the alleged incident on Wednesday afternoon, four council enforcement officers, in plain clothes, dismantled and carted away signboards of three shops - a photo studio, money-changer and mobile retail outlets, located at the ground floor of the Penang's tallest building.

According to the photo studio operator, Chuah Kah Meng, 21, the four men posing as council enforcement officers came to his shop and told him that the studio's electronic signboard was on the pavement and obstructing human traffic at Komtar.

The enforcement officers then immediately dismantled the signboard and carted it to a nearby van.

They also went to the neighbouring moneychanger and mobile phone outlets and carried out similar operations.

Chuah said the men refused to produce their council authorisation cards when he requested for them.

### **Action caught on tape**

He was puzzled on why the council officers carted away his signboard, which had been on the pavement for the past four years.

"After four years, the council enforcement unit suddenly found our signboards to have caused obstruction. The officers conducted the raid without issuing a prior notice to us," he said.

"They also did not hand over a list of seized items to us as required by the council procedures," complained Chuah, who with the other two outlet operators had already lodged a joint police report on the incident since.

One of his staff made a video recording of the operations. A copy of the video

footage was submitted to the council for further investigation.

Riduan said that under the council's procedures and by-laws, all enforcement officers shall be in uniform when conducting operations, produce their authorisation cards and hand over a list of seized items to the shop operators.

He said that the council would not compromise on disciplinary complaints on its staff.

"As a responsible municipality, we will carry out a thorough probe and take the necessary action," he said.

The incident has caused a quiet a stir in the local press and among the local residents.

Locals had been discussing the matter in the 'Letters to Editor' pages in vernacular newspapers and websites, mainly criticising the council enforcement officers of violating local government procedures.

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