

10 arrested for 'greeting' PM in yellow at KL Sentral
Malaysiakini.com
July 27, 2011

Ten people, including an aide to Ampang MP and a PKR youth leader, were arrested at the KL Sentral this afternoon for wearing yellow and seeking to hand over a memorandum on the Bersih 2.0 demands to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

Mohd Fareez Kamal Intizam, the aide to Zuraida Kamaruddin, was arrested by a group of police officers as Najib arrived at the main transport hub.

"Ironically, one of us was wearing a Malaysian jersey and I myself was wearing the 'Patriot' colour of red, and we were arrested," Fareez told Malaysiakini.

The 10 were taken to the Travers police station.

Besides Fareez, PKR Youth deputy information chief Rozan Azen Mat Rasip was also among those arrested.

Najib and several cabinet ministers were on the Express Rail Link, heading from Putrajaya to KL Sentral to distribute the Jalur Gemilang flags in a run-up to the national day celebrations on Aug 31.

Among those arrested was PKR Youth leader Zaki Yamani Zainon, who was arrested just as he was about to hand the memorandum to Najib [Watch video].

'Unlawful, uncalled for'

In an immediate response to the incident, lawyer and PKR vice-president N Surendran who happened to be at the Travers police station with a client in a separate case condemned the arrests.

This is a totally unlawful and uncalled for arrest, which is nothing but harassment of political party members and activists.

"One would think that in a democracy citizens can wear yellow at KL Sentral."

Surendran (right) demanded that the police provide an immediate explanation.

"We demand the immediate release of all 10 arrested and an explanation from the inspector-general of police Ismail Omar, and action be taken against the police that ordered this arrests," he said.

'Democratic right denied'

The 10 were released at 6pm after police recorded their statements for close to two hours. Speaking outside the police station, Rozan Azem said the group regretted that they were unable to exercise their democratic right.

"We had lined up with everyone else in front of McDonalds (to see the prime minister), the police had even identified us and we told them we were from PKR, there were no problems.

But when we tried to pass the memo to the prime minister we were pushed, some of us even fell and suffered bruises," he said.

It was later learned that aside from the six PKR Youth Wing members arrested, the remaining four were in fact a family of civilians who had worn yellow to KL Sentral.

The family declined to be named, but claimed that they were merely there to look around.

When contacted, PKR legal bureau chief Latheefa Koya, who acted for the 10, said that they were being investigated under Section 105 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC).

“The section basically deals with police powers to deal with a nuisance,” she said.

Detainees up to mischief, say police

Among the demands of the memo that the group had tried to submit to the prime minister are the immediate release of those detained without trial under the Emergency Ordinance including Sungai Siput MP D Jeyakumar and five other Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) members.

Another two demands called for the setting up of a bipartisan commission to study and implement reforms to the election system and the holding of a referendum if such reforms were to be implemented.

Shortly after their release, the police posted a statement on their Facebook page, explaining that the 10 were arrested after police were informed that there would be people wearing yellow who are up to mischief at KL Sentral.

“The suspects were wearing plain yellow clothes and were shouting 'Reformasi'. The arrests are a reaction to a police report made by the Brickfields district police headquarters that there will be a group of youths in yellow clothing up to mischief,” it read.