

Pemandu's acronyms not making us safer

Malaysiakini.com

November 5 ,2011

by Arvin Chia

Allow me to relate an incident that happened to me this morning. I live in USJ Subang Jaya and this morning at 11am, I went to the nearby town centre, Taipan, to buy some items from the hardware store. As a law abiding citizen, I parked my car a distance away across the main road at another block of shoplots and walked over to the shop.

On my way back at about 11.30am, as I was waiting to cross the main road to get to my car, whilst holding a few items in my hands, a lone motorcyclist suddenly appeared out of nowhere and snatched my gold chain from my neck from behind.

Before I or anyone of the numerous people and motorists in their cars could do anything, the criminal zoomed off amongst the jam of cars. It happened in the blink of an eye and I now understand why a lot of snatch theft victims say that they were unable to react in time. Bear in mind that I am a 6 foot 82 kg, 41-year-old male. Even the police were surprised that the criminal was so daring to rob a person like me as they rarely target males according to them and more so a fairly larger sized specimen such as myself.

Why am I taking the trouble to write in to you, you may ask? Well, because I believe that we as Malaysians deserve much more than a lot of rhetoric and nice sounding sound bites regarding all the various acronyms that Pemandu has launched. I refer to Eugene's press conference recently where it was declared that Pemandu's crime NKRA's are working.

According to the said article, it was stated that an additional 30,000 police officers have been reassigned to hotspots. Trust me, we don't see them. The sergeant who took down my report was lamenting to me about his lack of resources as he had insufficient men to patrol, investigate etc.

Thus, the rhetoric and the reality aren't in sync are they? USJ and Subang Jaya are definitely huge residential areas and crime hotspots. Why is it that even with a police station opened up in a shophouse in Taipan itself that criminals are still so brazenly daring in carrying out such thefts in broad daylight? What about the CCTV's that are supposedly at all main corners/junctions?

I can safely say that our criminal minded members of society are able to get away with virtually anything as we as a country can't even seem to control a simple thing like illegal stickers defacing public property all over the place, even signboards and roads signs. Nowhere else have we seen such blatant disregard for

the law except for our beloved nation. I know this issue well and am trying to do something about it.

Let me state that I am a proactive Malaysian who many years ago founded the USJ9 neighbourhood watch and subsequently for the last few years, pre and post 2008, I have sat as a committee member of the MPSJ Jawatankuasa Penduduk (JKP) Zon 3. We as committee members commit our precious time on a purely voluntary basis towards trying to improve the liveability of our community and every year, conduct many activities/programmes to make people's lives a bit better.

Trust me when I say that I have seen things deteriorate over the years especially with regard to crime and as I stated above, blatant disregard for the laws by everybody. My story of being a snatch theft victim is not an isolated one as our Councillor for JKP Zon 3, Rajiv's brother was violently attacked from behind last week in Subang Jaya SS14, beaten up and robbed.

We are men. How are we to protect our wives and families if we can't rely on the police and government to play their role in minimizing the danger to us as citizens when we go about our daily business? Almost everyone I know has been a victim of snatch theft, car windows smashed at traffic lights and robbed e.t.c. These are not statistics, these are real people getting robbed and traumatised!

Eugene, you were quoted as saying, "In 2009, the main problem was snatch theft. But with a lot more police officers patrolling the streets, the number of snatch thefts was reduced. However, it doesn't mean we have resolved the issue". Definitely the issue hasn't been resolved much less reduced if you ask most of us Malaysians.

Ask anyone and they will tell you that spotting police patrolling the streets either on foot or in cars is almost like striking the lottery. As stated, I stay in SJ but I work in the heart of downtown KL and frequently walk around Jln Raja Chulan and Bukit Bintang during lunchtime etc. These are busy places with tons of tourists; hardly any cops in sight at all save for those directing traffic during rush hour.

Contrast this with major cities around the world; NY, London, HK, Singapore, police presence is visible everywhere and this definitely has an impact on would be criminals. In fact, the sergeant told me just now that even with a shortage of men, what he's trying to do is to get 1 policeman in a patrol car to patrol and his instructions if he comes across anything are to radio for backup as there normally should be 2 of them in 1 vehicle. He agreed that the visibility of the police has been proven to reduce the incidence of crime. So, if you say that there are an extra 30,000 officers deployed to hotspots, how come we aren't seeing them? Or are they all hiding behind some bushes somewhere?

I truly hope that as a law-abiding tax paying (the 10% who supports the balance 90% as you point out

frequently, Idris) , that more concrete action will be taken ASAP to bring a greater police presence where it is truly needed. The 'broken glass theory" works which I believe Rudy Giuliani implemented when he became NY mayor and subsequently reduced crime drastically.

We need to see this happening here. When people don't give a damn about speeding past red lights, breaking traffic rules at whim, defacing public property, dumping illegally, how do you address the bigger crime issues? There has to be a return to civility and abiding by the law. That will only happen if there's a fear of getting caught, which I can say with certainty that at this point of time, is virtually non-existent.

I hope this letter won't be filed away and forgotten as I would expect a response on how the government of the day is going to proactively make us feel that much safer about this country which we call home.

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