

Bersih condemns attack on ABU ceramah
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S Pathmawathy

The Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (Bersih) condemned the attack on participants at a ceramah organised by Anything But Umno (ABU) and demanded the police investigate the incident urgently.

abu ceramah disturbed 220112 03In a statement yesterday, the Bersih steering committee said that the action of the youths who "rudely" stopped the ceramah in the Shah Alam City Council hall, had stark similarities to another incident in 1996.

The committee said "dirty and violent" tactics were used to disrupt the Asia Pacific Coalition for East Timor II (Apcet II) conference held at a hotel in Kuala Lumpur in November 1996.

"Such gangsterism must be stopped. It is the duty and responsibility of the police to protect citizens exercising their constitutional right to assemble and speak," said the committee.

Rowdy gatecrashers

Saturday's ceramah was called off just before it was due to start at 9pm when rowdy gatecrashers came in and insisted the participants vacate the premise.

The ceramah titled "Tamatkan regim Umno/BN" (End Umno/BN's Regime) was co-organised by ABU and Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf).

Eyewitness accounts stated that the group was unruly and even attacked one man, who was rushed to the hospital.

The police, however, skirted around the matter contending that no one was injured in the melee.

"Selangor police chief Tun Hisan Tun Hamzah and Shah Alam district police chief Zahedi Ayob have both brushed off claims of injury and made light of the serious situation.

"Their comments and failure to take any action are an embarrassment to the police when there is clear video evidence showing the storming of the event and the injury to one of the participants," said Bersih.

The committee added that the police denials were tantamount to condoning the violence that occurred.

"Their failure to respond in a prompt and pro-active manner is an invitation for others to commit similar acts of violence with impunity," it added.

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