

Sha'ani upbraids cops over 'stupid' statements

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Human rights commissioner Mohd Sha'ani Abdullah blew his top today over what he deemed as the "stupidity" and immaturity of senior police officers and their statements on a recent disturbance during an anti-BN ceramah in Klang.

"As senior officers, their standards are way higher. They must know their facts and know their responsibility," he told reporters at the commission's headquarters in Kuala Lumpur.

"I cannot accept their statements. They should work to earn our respect and not just show that they are the boss."

NONEMohd Sha'ani (right) however clarified that this is his personal viewpoint, though he will table it to the Human Rights Commission (Suhakam).

He said the police are meant to represent all of society, not just the majority.

He chastised the police for seemingly making excuses for the aggressors, empowering them to do as they please, to the detriment of the human rights of those who are the victims of the assault.

"Malaysia's eminent institutions do not understand human rights principles," he lamented, equating any compromise on human rights for "security purposes to an abuse of power".

He contended that the police are supposed to keep the peace and prevent untoward incidents, not compromise and reduce the rights of Malaysians to free expression.

This, he said, is what happens when the police just look for an easy way out to lighten their work load, and effect "arrest without warrant, charge without proof, punish without trial."

Asked if Suhakam itself would be issuing a severe reprimand to the police over their "stupidity" and "lack of maturity", he said this would depend on the outcome of the meeting.

"That depends on the commission. After we meet, we may issue a statement or use other means to express our views."

One injured

He was commenting on statements by the Shah Alam OCPD and police over the incident last Saturday when about 20 youths, who may have included Umno and BN members, allegedly disrupted a ceramah held by anti-BN group Asalkan Bukan Umno-BN (ABU).

The police had reportedly commented that the ceramah, which they said started during evening prayers and contained speeches that irked the ire of over 1,000 villagers, had to be ordered cancelled in the face of mounting local dissent.

abu ceramah disturbed 220112 03Police also maintained that they was no damage to the venue and surrounding stalls and no one was injured.

However, ABU organisers who came to lodge a report with Suhakam today disputed the statement point-by-point.

The NGO insisted that only 20 youths had rushed the ceramah at 9.15pm, before it even started. it said

speeches had not yet begun and that the session had not been organised during evening prayers.

ABU also claimed that a member of the audience identified only as Krishna, of Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS, had been injured by the stick-wielding intruders.

Video footage of assault

To support their claim, the NGO presented Suhakam with two video recordings on the assault by the group.

NONE In the video, one attacker was seen punching an organiser and several youths armed with sticks were seen rushing into the hall, knocking aside chairs and threatening those in the hall, targeting Indians in the crowd. Scuffles erupted as a result.

Some of the attacking youth rode their motorcycles close to the venue entrance, gunning the engines and honking loudly. One was seen riding his machine inside the hall.

Based on the footage, the ABU organisers appeared calm and did not react belligerently, despite the provocation.

ABU also furnished pictures of the faces and motorcycle registration numbers of the attacking group, which did not appear to be 1,000-strong in the footage, but numbering just under two dozen.

ABU urged Suhakam to investigate the matter and take stern action. Mohd Sha'ani promised to see this through.

Present to state ABU's case were key organisers Badrul Hisham Shahrin from Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia, S Arutchelvan from PSM, Hindraf national coordinator W Sambulingam and Haris Ibrahim of Saya Anak Bangsa Malaysia.

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