

Penang journalists condemn attack by Perkasa, Umno
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Five journalist organisations in Penang have severely condemned a group of hostile pro-Lynas supporters at a gathering in Esplanade on Sunday for attacking two journalists on duty.

The organisations include the Penang Press Club, Penang Chinese Media Journalists and Photographers Association, Journalists Union of North Malaya, Penang Press Employees' Cooperative Society Ltd and Seberang Perai Press Association.

Spokesperson for the group Chew Hock Pheng said the Seremban Umno Youth members were making trouble at the scene and Penang Perkasa northeast district chairman Mohd Rizuad Mohd Azudin led his supporters to interfere at the peaceful assembly.

"We strongly condemn the perpetrators of violence and brutal force against unarmed journalists. They were injured from the assault by a group of reckless rioters," Chew said.

"We strongly urge Perkasa and Umno to clarify their involvement in the attack of reporters," Chew, who is Kwong Wah Jit Poh assistant general manager, added in a statement.

Chew handed the statement to journalists at a press conference held at the newspaper's head office in Penang, with Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and the two injured journalists yesterday.

The Esplanade event was organised by human rights NGO Suaram in solidarity with the Himpunan Hijau 2.0 protest in Kuantan against potential radioactive hazard by Gebeng's Australian-based Lynas Advanced Materials Plant.

About 15,000 participants turned out for the Kuantan rally, with large gatherings in Perak and Kuala Lumpur as well, but it was only the Penang leg, participated by about 500, which was disrupted.

Meanwhile, the injured reporters had lodged police reports and submitted clear photos of the assailants for police investigations, Chew said, while handing reporters their police report.

Journalist was defending himself

Journalist Adam Chew from Kwong Wah Jit Poh who sustained injuries and was treated with eight stitches said he was ready to be questioned by police as he could identify his attackers.

He added that his attackers descended on him while he was on stage, trying to prevent Lim from being punched on the back.

Chew (right) said he was merely defending himself, as he was hit with a helmet, and five or six other men closed in on him, to punch and kick him until he fell on his face.

Another journalist from the same newspaper, Lee Hong Chun, sustained light bruises on his head as he too, was whacked with a helmet by the same group.

"We look forward to impartial treatment by the police," said Chew.

However, Chew said they "regretted" that the police on duty did not ask for more support from the force which indirectly resulted in the attackers becoming even "more arrogant".

"We hope that state police chief Ayub Yaacob would look into the matter seriously and start investigations

into the attack.

“If it is confirmed that policemen had neglected their duties, immediate disciplinary action should be taken against them,” he stressed.

Ayub defended his force’s lack of presence at the event, saying organiser did not inform the police about the rally, and that the NGO was then responsible for the peace and safety of the protesters.

But Chew reiterated that the country is ruled by law and should never allow anyone to take the law in their own hands.

He urged Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak to order the police to make a fair investigation into this case.

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