

NUJ: Media harassed to black out police misconduct?

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The National Union of Journalists (NUJ) today said the alleged heavy-handedness of police on media personnel during the Bersih 3.0 rally raises questions on the police's claimed restraint and professional conduct.

NONEAs such general-secretary V Anbalagan (right) called on inspector-general of police Ismail Omar to explain why journalists were apparently targetted during yesterday's rally.

"Media workers could be identified by their press tags...(so) why were they targeted yesterday? Is it to confiscate photos or footage which would have put (the police) in a very bad light?" he asked.

Speaking to Malaysiakini, he added that media personnel were carrying out their duties to "provide news coverage of an event which was closely followed by the public yesterday".

NUJ also urged all media personnel who were roughed up, either by police or the public, and had their property harmed or seized, to lodge police reports.

Meanwhile, PKR has slammed the prime minister for "unprecedented" attacks and arrests of journalists covering the Bersih 3.0 rally yesterday.

" It is clear that the press were systematically and deliberately targeted by the police force.

NONE"Such coordinated and sustained attacks could not have been carried out without orders from the police leadership and the Home Ministry," said PKR vice-president N Surendran (left) in a statement today.

"Prime Minister Najib and his government must take full responsibility for the criminal acts against the press.

"Among those arrested were a photojournalists from Malaysiakini, Guang Ming newspaper and a Malay Mail journalist.

"Among others assaulted or had their cameras damaged or memory cards confiscated were journalists from Nanyang, Channel News Asia, Al Jazeera, Makkal Osai and Merdeka Review," he added.

The human rights lawyer alleged that the attacks on the media were to "prevent journalists from recording police aggression, violence and assaults upon the public".

"This explains why press photographers and photojournalists were mainly targeted."

Yesterday Malaysiakini journalist Koh Jun Lin was arrested along with several other members of the press while covering the rally at Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur.

Koh reports he was punched by the police, and his memory card containg photographs of the rally were confiscated, while another photographer said police destroyed his memory card after he refused to delete photographs of a melee.

