

PSM: Gov't obsession with a rectangle caused chaos
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The government's "obsession" with protecting the symbolic Dataran Merdeka from any democratic movement resulted in "excessive force" being used in reaction to the barricade breach, said PSM.

NONEPSM secretary-general S Arutchelvan (right) said in a statement today, the entire episode that since ensued on Saturday could have been avoided had the government simply let the protestors into the Dataran.

He was commenting on the police action at the end of the Bersih 3.0 rally last weekend, now being blamed on the protestors breaching a segment of the police barricade that cordoned off the square,

"If Dataran Merdeka was allowed, then the police would not have to run all around KL and police would have had an easier task of monitoring the situation.

"Our main question here is, why does the government allow the whole KL city to suffer just in order to protect one rectangle called Dataran Merdeka – Independence Square?

"The answer is simply, the government does not want to see any democratic movement occupy Dataran Merdeka which has its historical importance.

NONE "Many people spoke about Tahrir square and equate Merdeka square to that," said Arutchelvan.

"It is perhaps of this one reason that the government used all its might to protect this square.

"It is because of this that they used excessive force and became paranoid when the Dataran Merdeka barrier was removed by a small segment of the people.

"The authorities were obsessed to protect Dataran Merdeka at all cost and used all their arsenal to protect this square," he said.

Breach no excuse

Prime Minister Najib Razak last night said the government was adamant about keeping protestors out of Dataran claiming protestors had planned to occupy it "long-term".

The PSM leader however echoed the Malaysian Bar's assessment that the breach was no excuse to "unleash the police terror on the peaceful rally".

dataran breach barricade cordon 290412 "Because of this high handed and irrational act by the police, it resulted in many problems which otherwise could have been avoided," he said, adding that the day's events had been peaceful and "festive" up to then.

On the question of who breached the barricade, Arutchelvan said, "It is my opinion that there is nothing really wrong in people breaking the barricades in Dataran Merdeka for the simple fact that the people wanted the Dataran liberated and stand true to its name Independence Square'."

He said the police could have used their discretion to allow the people into the square since there were constant calls from those present to be let in.

He added that it was worrying that there were allegedly "agent provocateurs and some policemen were even wearing the Bersih T-shirts" at the scene.

"If this is indeed true, then there is no more question or reasoning with regards to the 'peacefulness' of the assembly.

"There were definitely some element who wanted to disrupt and provoke the peaceful assemble to turn unruly," said Arutchelvan.

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