

'Provocateurs behind chaos at Dataran'

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By Hafiz Yatim

Faridah Abdull, the head of the Selangor PAS women's wing, blames agents provocateurs for causing the panic and chaos at Dataran Merdeka leading to the use of tear gas and chemical-laced water during the Bersih 3.0 rally on Saturday.

NONESpeaking from her bed at Kuala Lumpur Hospital, where she has been warded with severe stomach injuries, Faridah said she was in the crowd that had gathered at the water fountain off Jalan Tun Perak.

At that time, the crowd was about to disperse on the orders of Bersih co-chairperson Ambiga Sreenevasan and PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim.

However, Faridah said, she heard people at the back - who were wearing Bersih T-shirts - telling the crowd to move forward and that 'Anwar suruh baling' (Anwar says to throw things).

"I thought the directive could not be right as I know Anwar personally. As the younger people started to throw things, the police dropped tear gas canisters from above onto the crowd.

"There were many old people, including one from Baling, Kedah. I don't know what happened to them."

As the protesters panicked and ran, Faridah was trampled on, resulting in her injuries.

When she had difficulty in passing motion, the doctors suggested that surgery be performed, out of fear that part of her intestines were ruptured.

"However, the CT scan proves otherwise and I look forward to an immediate recovery," said Faridah who is being cared for by her two daughters, a college lecturer and a teacher.

She also had a number of stitches to a wound on her head.

PKR vice-presidents Nurul Izzah Anwar, N Surendran and Chua Jui Meng, a former health minister, visited Faridah today.

Faridah told about Najib's visit

She said the police and hospital officials had informed her of Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's intention to visit her at the Hospital Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

However, Faridah said she had told the officials not to allow this.

"budget 2006 300905 najib hishamI told them if Najib or (Home Minister) Hishammuddin Hussein come to my ward, I will throw my slippers at them. They did not come," she said when met at the hospital bed.

"They had caused (the chaos) as I only came to sit down and protest and nothing else. We did not carry any weapons. I only brought my handbag and this was lost in the chaos."

Faridah said Wanita Umno head Shahrizat Abdul Jalil had come to visit, but that she had rebuffed her.

"I did not entertain her and also told her I am even more determined to defeat Umno, as are my children," said the mother of five from Klang.

Shahrizat had arrived with Deputy Health Minister Rosnah Abdul Rashid Shirlin.

NONEFaridah's husband Mohd Ismath Habib Mohamad told Malaysiakini that the agent provocateurs who he suspects to be special branch officers were out to create chaos.

Ismath said he took part in the Bersih 3.0 rally with his wife and children.

"I saw three to four people wearing Bersih t-shirts dropping the tear gas canisters from above, near the water fountain, and this resulted in the chaos.

"We had asked for time to disperse as the crowd was huge, but they threw the tear gas and were out to cause the trouble, resulting in injuries to the people," Ismath said.

"There is no reason for the police to do this as the crowd was about to disperse. It's the police who started the trouble. It was a peaceful gathering, with thousands of Malaysian from various races, religions and walks of life gathered for the sit-in protest."

However, Ismath said the tear gas directed at the people caused many to run, and this resulted in the injuries to his wife. He is thankful that she is all right.

He and his wife, he said, have yet to lodge a police report on the incident, and are also consulting with their lawyers on the possibility of taking legal action.

"Let her recover first... then we will see," he added.

Faridah is the mother of student leader Khalid Ismath of Kami.

