

Don black on Press Freedom Day, urges DAP
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The DAP has urged the public to wear black on Press Freedom Day (May 3) in protest of police brutality against journalists covering the Bersih rally last Saturday.

In a statement today, DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng said the public should stand in solidarity with the journalist fraternity because they had become victims during the rally.

radzi razak najib 290412“That the police did indeed beat up members of the media is irrefutable when the prime minister himself whispered an apology to The Sun reporter Radzi Razak who was warded in hospital after the beating,” he said.

Scores of reporters received medical treatment following the rally on April 28 due to assaults while attempting to document heavy-handed police tactics on protesters.

Among those was Radzi, who believes he was attacked by up to seven police personnel in full uniform.

There were also reports of police intentionally damaging press photographers' cameras and confiscating the memory cards.

While calling for a full investigation into the claims, Lim said the public must be mindful that previous attacks against journalists had not been prosecuted.

This includes an incident involving two journalists during a pro-Umno protest on the Penang bridge last July and another involving two journalists during a pro-Umno counter-protest at an anti-Lynas rally at Penang Esplanade.

“If Umno and Perkasa ordinary thugs can get away with assaulting reporters in Penang, with no action taken to date despite plenty of photo and video evidence, can we really expect any justice when it is the police themselves perpetrating the act this time?”

“Only an independent inquiry comprising international experts can be trusted with providing a credible report on how to apportion blame to the police so that we can find out the truth of what happened,” he said.

Journalists have twice embarked on a black shirt campaign, similar to what Lim is suggesting, following the arrest of a journalist in 2008 under the Internal Security Act and following the death of Teoh Beng Hock, a journalist turned political-aide.

However, Lim's critics have pointed out that he adopts a double standard towards press freedom, because Guan Eng, as Penang chief minister, often bars certain media organisations from covering his press conferences.

